



The speaking stones of Jordan

By Bill and Lee Jobling

THE desert region of southern Jordan is a stark, spectacular land, harshly arid and uninviting to the sustenance of human life. This always led to the belief that few people could have ever made it their home. Recently, however, an Australian team has begun to show that, far from being virtually unpopulated, the region has had a long history of habitation and population movement. If the troops of Midian prowled and prowled around, as an English hymn has it, then it may well have been here that they did their prowling and, while doing it, they or someone very like them left a rich historical record on the rocks and walls of Jordan's desert wadis.

It was during the winter of 1979-80 that the Aquila-Ma'an Archaeological and Epigraphic Survey discovered the first of what has proved to be an abundant hoard of ancient rock drawings and inscriptions. The enormous number of these finds reveals that an area once considered culturally barren is, in fact, full of graphic evidence of man's response to his environment. The survey team now is quite sure that about 2,000 years ago the region was demographically very different, and that the rock graffiti was largely the work of people living in settled communities rather than that of desert nomads.

The movement of people in the past is evidenced by thousands of human markings, which were usually incised on the upper surface of large boulders where the black patina of the desert forms. This makes a splendid background for the pale gold drawings of animals and humans, which serve as a guide to the lifestyles of the artists and the social conditions that prevailed. They are a guide, too, to climatic variations and how different, in all probability, the region's climate and vegetation were in antiquity.

Animals, such as leopards, are unheard of in Jordan today, but they appear as a relatively popular subject in the old rock art. This suggests that the gradual change of vegetation over the last two to three millennia must have led to the dying out of movement of the species.

These stones, which make up the scree at the base of the hills and cliffs that rise from the wadis,

are the canvases on which the early artists painted. Among the many hunting and herding scenes are depictions of men on horseback, ibex, ostriches, leopards, hyenas, dogs and camels. Some are both socially informative and aesthetically pleasing, especially the drawings of camels. Clearly, these ancient people were closely associated with their environment and with the animal life that shared it with them. Often the artist adapted the subject to the shape of a rock surface, so that the end result bears the wholeness of a completed work of art.

One of the most prolific artists was "Sasrat," whose name appears beside many drawings. After several years of work with the inscriptions, members of the survey team are sometimes able to recognise an individual writing style, even when there is no signature. Usually, a unique way of forming particular letters is the guideline. The work of one person is often found in various places in a wadi, indicating the movement of a caravan or of a herd.

The drawings can be approximately dated by the inscriptions that sometimes accompany them,

which are usually in Old North Arabian script (Thamudic). Some, however, are in Nabataean, the language of the people of Petra, the ancient city carved out of mountain rock in south Jordan. Many of these inscriptions are genealogies and give identity to the artists. Some are prayers. Others are a combination of the two, saying things like: "By Habib son of Binlah son of Habib, and may Dushams (the god) remember Shekmalak, and Habib inscribed (this)."

One such drawing of a camel and its attendant inscription has finally solved the mystery of the phonetic value of a Thamudic grapheme and clearly will end an international linguistic debate. Until now, scholars have attributed the sound "th" to the consonant in question, but it is now quite certain that the sound should be pronounced "g." This means that many words that were previously known from North Arabic, but mistranslated, can now be more accurately understood.

The bedouins of the area today, always friendly, hospitable and helpful, are quick to show the way to the many sites known to

them from their long, intimate knowledge of the land, of herding goats, sheep and camels up and down the wadis. On one occasion, when members of the team attempted, without much success, to emulate the rock drawings, a young bedouin boy disappeared for a moment and returned with a sharp flint, found in the wadi bed, and a stone. Beating the stone against the flint, he soon produced a drawing of a camel very like the pre-Islamic ones. His, however, was much clearer; many hundreds of years will be necessary to bring it to the colour of those made by the forerunners of his tribe. And if he were to inscribe it, he would use Arabic, not the old script of the Thamudic or Nabataean people who once populated his land.

The immense number of inscriptions indicates not only that people lived here but that these wadis may have been important caravan trade routes. This could add to the already intricate pattern of movement in an area that, until recently, has been archaeologically neglected because of its harsh environment. The rock drawings give evidence of a large number of people living in and moving through the area.

Photos by Michael Bannigan

In many places, it is possible to see quite clearly the deeply worn tracks made over the centuries by camel hooves plodding steadily between the Arabian peninsula and the northern trading cities.

The genealogies inscribed on the rocks tell us the artists' names and often the names of their fathers and grandfathers. But who were these people? How did they live and to whom did they owe allegiance? Our answers must, to a certain extent, be speculative. At least some of them were educated — they could write; the evidence is there in the stones of the wadis. They herded and hunted; scenes of both activities abound. They fought with each other as well as with wild animals, and they may have had domesticated dogs. Many scenes show men with weapons engaged in combat. Others show them pursuing ibex, apparently accompanied by dogs who seem to be attacking the prey. The artists had a sense of humor, too, and like their modern counterparts, often left specifically erotic graffiti.

The genealogies, which extend back to the third, fourth and sometimes earlier generations, are important statements that reflect the social structures and values of the pre-Islamic people. Together with the rock art, the inscriptions reveal many things about man's relationship to the land and provide us with a most explicit picture of the life of the writers. The genealogies have social and legal implications. They are statements of relationships concerning protection, vengeance, rights of pasture or water resources, and give details of marriage lines that indicate prospective wives and the taboos of women. This information provides a description of the life and times of these areas long before the advent of Islam in the seventh century A.D.

The people who left their mark so clearly on the land were most likely farmers living in small villages. Their drawings show that the area supported a multiplicity of animal life, unlike today when few animals other than the domesticated herds of the bedouins can be found. The human population was probably much greater, too. The remains of various cisterns, dams and wells suggest that what is now desert

was once a more favourable environment. This evidence of hydro-technology — of the controlled use of surface and underground water — indicates a certain level of technical knowledge and social organisation and is a clue to the type of culture that existed.

As in all desert lands, water is a most important commodity. The best known watering place in the area is called "Lawrence's Bath." However, there are many other places where water is obtainable, some of which have been in use for at least two thousand years. Natural places of catchment on the rock faces of the hills and mountains have been widened and deepened by the bedouins, and their forerunners. On the sites of ancient settlements, one can see the remains of large cisterns with capacities of more than 100,000 litres. One such cistern, hallowed out of the rock of a hill, is still in use by today's bedouins, as is any ancient water hole that continues to collect moisture. Rock-hewn channels and the remains of aqueducts used by the people of antiquity to carry water across wadis have been found as well. This is evidence of a high degree of skill in building techniques and hydro-technology.

Many of the cisterns, dams and channels carry the distinctive signature of the Nabataeans, whose main centre was Petra. They had a special manner of hatching stone that can still be seen in the monuments of that city and which is also evident in the stone walls of the waterways in the southern desert wadis. The bedouins have done little to change these water collection sites; in fact, they needed to do little. Given the highly developed techniques of the original builders, these ancient water facilities have stood well the test of time and usage.

The rock art and inscriptions, too, have endured; and the vast numbers that have been found in Jordan indicate that similar markings must be awaiting discovery in the areas still unexplored. The task is as daunting as the desert is wide; but with the continued support of the Australian Government, the Jordan Department of Antiquities and the University of Sydney, it is hoped that much of the wonderful rock art of pre-Islamic Jordan will be recorded for posterity.



On this rockface was found the inscription that led to a significant breakthrough in understanding a phonetic mystery in the ancient Thamudic alphabet.

JTV Channel 2 Preview

Sat. — March 19, 1988

8:30 Special programme

9:00 Variety Show

10:20 Feature Film
Forbidden Knowledge

Starring:
Anthony Quinn

A film about an engineer who was accused as being behind a disaster.



Sun. — March 20, 1988

8:30 Special programme

9:10 Costean Adventure
New documentary

10:20 Secret Army
Hymn to Freedom

Mon. — March 21, 1988

8:30 Are You Being Served

9:10 Vanity Fair

10:20 Feature Film
A Fight for Jenny

Starring:
Philip Michael Thomas
Lesley Ann Warren

The film based on a true story drama about a southern couple whose marriage prompts a Supreme Court battle with her ex-husband to gain custody of their young daughter.

Tue. — March 22, 1988

8:30 Special programme

9:10 Standby... Light!
Camera! Action!

10:20 Murder She Wrote
Obituary for a Dead Anchor

11:10 Three's Company
Cyrano de Tripper

Chrissy, whose skills in the kitchen aren't exactly sharp, invites a gourmet to share a home-cooked dinner, then pleads with Jack to be her secret stand-in chef. Jack complains, "I'm cooking to light another guy's fire!" When he agrees to prepare the dinner, but to add insult to injury Jack must not be seen in the kitchen.

Wed. — March 23, 1988

8:30 Special programme

9:00 Well Being
Heart Attack

Heart disease is a major cause of unnecessary death in Britain. This programme special looks at what causes heart disease and what can be done to prevent it.

Filmed in Britain, the USA and Canada, the programme features the live-saving cardiac rescue

Vanity Fair — Mon. at 9.10

team of the Seattle Fire Department, the amazing Toronto heart attack victims who have become marathon runners and open heart surgery at the National Heart Hospital in Loodoo. It also warns against the excess of animal and dairy fat in our diet and shows that the habits which lead to heart attacks are implanted in our children at an early age.

9:35 Tales Of The Unexpected
The Verger

10:20 Fields of Fire
Drama series

'Fields of Fire' tells the story of Bluey, an appealing young English immigrant who joins and becomes part of the soul of a small cane-cutting town; the hostility he meets from the established cutters; the love he finds with two young sisters; and the friendships he forms with his gang. It is a journey through an extraordinary physical and emotional landscape and through a world war to some kind of understanding of how the heart of a community continues to beat bravely in the face of tragedy.

Thur. — March 24, 1988

8:30 Special programme

9:10 Rags to Riches

10:20 Feature Film
Kids Like These

Starring:
Tyne Daly
Richard Crenna
Martia Balsam

The triumphs and heartbreaks of raising a Down's Syndrome child are movingly portrayed in this film. Joanna and Bob Goodman are the couple who decide to bring their afflicted child Alex home to raise him rather than give him up to an institution. They face ignorance and scorn from the medical community and from their own neighbours, yet they persevere.

Fri. — March 25, 1988

8:30 Special programme

9:10 Magnum

Dream A Little Dream

10:20 Falcon Crest
11:10 Some Mothers Do Have Them

TV & RADIO

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77111-19

PROGRAMME ONE

15:30 Koran
15:35 Programme Review
15:40 The Bunch
15:45 Eureka
15:50 How Things Work
15:55 The Invaders
16:00 Olympic Games
16:05 Local series
16:10 Message from Iraq
16:15 News Summary in Arabic
16:20 Family programme
16:25 Programme review
16:30 A special programme about Uganda

19:10 A special programme on North Yemen

20:00 News in Arabic
20:05 Arabic series
21:00 Programme on Jordan
21:05 Arabic series
21:10 News Summary in Arabic
21:15 Close down

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Florence on the way de chateau
18:05 News in French
18:10 French varieties: Un D6 de plus
18:15 News in Hebrew
18:20 News in Arabic
18:25 A special programme about unity of Islamic World

21:05 Magazine Zero One
21:10 Saturday Variety Show
21:15 News in English
21:20 Feature film: "Forbidden Knowledge"

RADIO JORDAN

855 KHz, AM & 99 MHz, FM & partly on 1250 KHz, SW

Tel: 77111-19

07:00 Morning Show
07:30 Newsweek
08:00 Morning Show
08:30 News Summary
08:45 Morning Show Contd.
08:50 Hallelujah: The Story of Melvina
09:00 News Summary
09:15 Top Twenty
09:30 Newsweek/Music
09:45 Date with a Star
10:00 Young Sound
10:30 Discovering Music
11:00 Play of the Week

BBC WORLD SERVICE

630, 720, 1325 KHz

06:00 Newsweek 06:30 Here's the House

06:45 Reflections 06:50 Financial News

07:00 World News 07:30 24 Hours

07:45 The World Today 08:00 Newsweek

08:30 Meridian 09:00 World News

09:30 24 Hours: News Summary 09:30

From the Weeklies 09:45 Network UK

10:00 World News 10:00 Reflections

10:15 A Jolly Good Show 11:00 World

11:30 British Press Review 11:35

The World Today 11:30 Financial

News: Sports Roundup 11:45 Personal

View 12:00 News Summary: Here's

the House 12:15 Letter from America

12:30 People and Politics 13:00 World

News 13:30 News About Britain 13:35

Chain Reaction 13:30 Meridian 14:00

Radio Newsweek 14:15 Midweek 3

14:45 Sports Roundup 15:00 World

News 15:30 Twenty-Four Hours: News

Summary 15:30 Network UK 15:45

Good Radio 16:00 News Summary:

Album Time 16:30 Sportsworld 17:00

Radio Newsweek 17:15 Sportsworld

18:00 World News 18:00 Commentary

18:15 Sportsworld 19:00 News Summary

WHAT'S GOING ON

TODAY'S EVENTS

EXHIBITIONS

* An art exhibition by Olivia Pallard at Alla Art Gallery (until March 28).

* Book exhibition at the Comprehensive Commercial Centre (Tower Building), Jabal Amman, 3rd floor (permanent).

* "Fifth Caricature Exhibition," works of the late Najil Al Ali at Hussein Camp Youth Activities Centre.

* General book exhibition at the Professional Associations Complex in Shmeisani.

* An exhibition entitled "Reconstruction of Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock" at King Abdullah Ibn Al Hussein Mosque.

FILMS

* "La voie lactee" at 8:00 p.m. at Aljouni Cinema in Sweidat.

* "The Tin Drum" (German with English subtitles) at 8:00 p.m. at the Goethe Institute.

LECTURE

* Konstantinos Politis, an archaeologist, will deliver a lecture on "Greece and Jordan: 3000 Years of Contacts" at 5:00 p.m. at the Orthodox Club, Jabal Amman.

CULTURAL CENTRES

Royal Cultural Centre .. Tel. 6010267

American Centre .. 644371

American Council Library .. 641520

British Council .. 6361478

French Cultural Centre .. 637009

Goethe Institute .. 641990

Soviet Cultural Centre .. 644203

Spanish Cultural Centre .. 639049

Turkish Cultural Centre .. 637777

Haya Arts Centre .. 665195

Muscat Youth City .. 667181/6

Y.W.C.A. .. 641795

Y.W.M.C.A. .. 644251

Amman Municipal Library .. 677111

Univ. of Jordan Library .. 643553

MUSEUMS

"Children's Heritage and Science Museum" Fun and knowledge for all ages, plus a small planetarium at the Haya Arts Centre. Open all week 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Closed on Friday.

Folklore Museum: Jewellery and costumes over 100 years old. Also mosaics from Madaba and Jerash (6th to 18th centuries). The Roman Theatre, Amman. Opening hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5 p.m. Year-round. Tel. 651700.

Jordan Archaeological Museum: Has an excellent collection of the antiquities of Jordan. Jabal Al Qal'a (Citadel Hill). Opening hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Fridays and official holidays 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.). Closed Tuesdays.

CHURCHES

St. Joseph Church (Roman Catholic) Jabal Amman. Tel. 624590.

Church of the Annunciation (Roman Catholic) Jabal Luvabidh, Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church (Roman Catholic) Jabal Hussein. Tel. 661757.

Terraced Church (Roman Catholic), Jabal Luvabidh, mass in Italian language, meet every Saturday at 3:30 p.m. Tel. 622366.

Church of the Annunciation (Greek Orthodox) Abadi. Tel. 623841.

Anglican Church (Church of the Redeemer) Jabal Amman. Tel. 623535, chaplain's residence tel. 601259.

Armenian Catholic Church Ashrafieh, Tel. 771531.

Armenian Orthodox Church Ashrafieh, Tel. 772021.

St. Ephraim Church (Syrian Orthodox) Ashrafieh, Tel. 771521.

Amman International Church (Inter-denominational) meet at Southern Baptist School in Shmeisani. Tel. 677534.

Evangelical Lutheran Church (Church of the Good Shepherd) Amman, Arabic Service: Saturday 7 p.m. Rev. N. Sair 811295.

Basilean Congregation (sects at the Good Shepherd's Church)

Interdenominational-communal Ecumenical Service: Saturday 6:30 p.m. Tel. 622625. Rev. Veli.

The Church of Jesus Christ at Latter-Day Saints (Mormons) 815917, 821264

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) Information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06) 53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

ROYAL JORDANIAN FLIGHTS (Terminal 1)

06:30 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

09:30 Cairo (RJ)

09:30 Kuwait (RJ)

09:30 Damascus (RJ)

09:30 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)

09:30 Dhahran (RJ)

09:30 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (RJ)

10:00 Agade (RJ)

10:45 Cairo (MS)

11:35 New York, London (RJ)

17:00 Athens (RJ)

18:00 Copenhagen, Frankfurt, (RJ)

19:00 Tripoli (RJ)

20:00 Agade (RJ)

20:00 Agade (RJ)

20:00 Vienna, New York (RJ)

21:00 Athens (RJ)

21:00 Cairo (RJ)

21:00 Rome, Madrid (RJ)

21:00 Geneva, Brussels (RJ)

22:00 London (RJ)

22:15 Frankfurt (RJ)

22:30 Cairo (RJ)

19:35

PLANS FOR AMMAN: Greater Amman Mayor Abdul Ra'uf Al Rayabdeh chaired a meeting to review plans for future municipal projects. These projects, according to municipal officials, include the establishment of more public gardens, opening of streets and roads, and also separating those damaged in the winter season.

PEOPLE'S ARMY: A group of People's Army recruits graduated after undergoing three months training course in the use of light arms and in first-aid skills. The graduates are all secondary school students from Koura school.

ZARQA CELEBRATION: Celebrations will be held in Zarqa Governorate Sunday marking the Al Israa Wal Mi'raj feast. The Department of Awaqaf and Islamic Affairs here has made arrangements for these celebrations, which will be held in 20 mosques around the governorate. Also in Zarqa a charity bazaar was opened Thursday by the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS) to mark the country's celebrations of Mothers Day, which falls on Monday March 21. The three-day bazaar displays national Jordanian costumes, paintings and embroideries as well as food and sweets.

HEALTH TALKS: The Health Ministry will take part in an advisory meeting on legislation for occupational health which will be held in May in Tunis by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

FAO PROGRAMMES: The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Assistant Director General Salah Juma'a arrived here Friday for talks with a number of Jordanian officials on FAO programmes and projects in Jordan.

ART EXHIBITION: Her Royal Highness Princess Wijdan Ali, the president of the Royal Society of Fine Arts, Thursday opened an art exhibition by Olivia Pallard at the Alia Art Gallery. The exhibition, organised by the French Cultural Centre in Amman, runs until March 28.

KARAMEH BATTLE: Mu'ta University in Karak has prepared a programme to celebrate the anniversary of the 1968 Karameh battle which falls on Monday. The programme includes poetry festival, display of posters and film shows about the battle.

PSYCHIATRISTS: The Jordanian Psychiatrists Association will take part in an international conference which will be held in Cairo Sunday, according to the association's president Adnan Takriti. Takriti, who will lead the delegation to the four-day conference, will submit a working paper on the sexual disturbances among Jordanian males. The conference, he added, will also discuss mental disturbances among children.

2 MURDERS: A 22-year-old man identified only as F.S.A. from Balqa Governorate killed his 28-year-old female cousin by firing several shots on her. The body was transferred to Al Hussein Hospital in Salt for autopsy and the man was apprehended. No reason was given for the murder. At Deir Alla, in the Jordan Valley a 25-year-old woman identified as S.M. was killed by an unidentified assailant. Police sources said that the victim received three fatal shots which caused her instant death.

S. KOREAN ENVOY: South Korea's outgoing ambassador in Amman Dong Soon Park will host a farewell party Sunday, March 27, on the occasion of the end of his term of office in Jordan. Park, ambassador to Jordan since May 1985, will be succeeded by Tae-Jin Park.

TRAINING FARM: University of Jordan President Abdul Salam Al Majali and a number of university board members Thursday paid an inspection visit to the university's training farm in the central Jordan Valley. Dr. Majali was briefed on the farm's activities and services by students and farmers in the valley.

LECTURE: Prof. Friedrich Bender will deliver a lecture in English on Geology and natural resources in Jordan Tuesday, March 22, at the Goethe Institute in Amman.

BROADCASTERS: British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) announcer Brian Ambringham is currently supervising a week-long intensive training programme for broadcasters of news in English at Radio Jordan and Jordan Television stations. The course is providing practical training in news reading to improve efficiency of the broadcasters.



Upper House of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Al Lawzi receives the Finnish Passikivi council in Amman Thursday (Petra photo)

Lawzi holds talks with Finnish Passikivi Council

AMMAN (Petra + J.T.) — A delegation from the Finnish Passikivi Council met here Thursday with the Upper House of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Al Lawzi and reaffirmed Finland's support for United Nations efforts to end the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The delegation leader voiced his country's appreciation of His

Majesty King Hussein's endeavours, and said the King's visit to Finland contributed a great deal towards the Finnish people's understanding of the just Arab cause.

He said the delegation augmented Finland's information and knowledge about Middle East

issues with this visit to Jordan, where its members were briefed on and also witnessed progress and development in all fields.

For his part, Lawzi spoke about the King's worldwide efforts for establishing peace in the Middle East.

He also explained Jordan's ongoing efforts to help the Palesti-

nian people since 1948 and reiterated the Kingdom's continued drive to convene an international conference for establishing a lasting peace in the area.

The 43-member delegation which is due to leave for home Saturday were taken on a tour of the ancient Nabatean city of Petra Friday.



Her Royal Highness Princess Basma gives a diploma to one of the graduates of Princess Rahmeh Community Centre in Salt Thursday (Petra photo)

Princess Basma attends graduation ceremony

SALT (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma visited the Princess Rahmeh Community Centre near Salt Thursday and attended the graduation ceremony of a group of 45 women who completed vocational training courses.

The graduates who received their diplomas from the Princess had been trained in hairdressing and food preservation processes within a programme organised by the centre and the Ain Al Pasha Vocational Training Centre.

Speakers at the graduation ceremony included the centre's Director Faisal Al Bashabshah who outlined the centre's co-operations and activities for the benefit of the local community.

Hmoud back from FAO regional talks in Oman

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Agriculture Marwan Al Hmoud Friday returned to Amman after heading Jordan's delegation to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) 19th Near East regional conference which concluded Thursday in Muscat, Oman.

Mr. Hmoud said the five-day conference discussed the agricultural situation in the region, as well as the production of strategic agricultural products such as cereals and red meat.

The conference urged member states to draw up and implement effective policies especially in the fields of pricing and marketing, in order to increase production and to narrow the food gap which is still widening in the region.

The conference, Mr. Hmoud said, also discussed three working papers on the development of fish farming in the region, the movement of manpower within the region and the impact of the migration on agricultural and rural development.

The conference also discussed the use of renewable energy resources and technology in agriculture.

The conference unanimously elected Dr. Sami Sunnaa, who is the director general of Jordan's Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC), as representative of the Near East region in the International Advisory Commission for Agricultural Researches for the years 1989-1992.

Participants also discussed the FAO working programme for the next two years and the current financial crisis it is facing, due to the failure of member states to pay their commitments towards the organisation.

During his visit to Oman, Mr. Hmoud held talks with the Omani minister of agriculture and fisheries on bilateral cooperation and the exchange of experiences in the agricultural field.

The Omani minister will visit Jordan at a later date at the invitation from Hmoud.

Medical team to study Zarqa Ma'in Spa water

AMMAN (Petra + J.T.) — An eight member medical team, from the Ministry of Health, has embarked on a study of the Zarqa Ma'in Spa water to determine its beneficial effects on health.

Dr. Khalil Hamed, the leader of the team said his colleagues will spend four days at the spa where they will offer treatment to patients and visitors, in addition to conducting water tests.

The spa management last week announced that a 150-room hotel, built within the spa complex, was open to the public and tourists from Jordan and foreign countries.

The Ishtar Hotel has adjoining integrated therapeutic facilities, using the hot and mineral water, and also has chalets to house visitors.

The complex has swimming pools, tennis courts, playing grounds for children and other essential recreation facilities. There are a total of 60 natural

springs at the spa containing minerals beneficial for patients suffering from rheumatism, sinusitis, arthritis and asthma, according to Health Ministry experts.

The spa can be reached through a newly built highway from Madaba, 30 kilometres south of Amman.



ARMY CELEBRATIONS: The Armed Forces Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Fathi Abu Forces holds a ceremony Thursday on the occasion of the Al Israa Wal Mi'raj feast under the patronage of speaker at the event (Petra photo)

Khatib, Ramadan discuss cooperation in energy

BAGHDAD (Petra + J.T.) — Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Hisham Al Khatib was received here Thursday by Iraqi First Deputy Prime Minister Taha Yassin Ramadan who discussed with him Jordanian-Iraqi cooperation in energy-related affairs.

Khatib, who attended an Arab energy conference which ended Thursday evening, had delivered Jordan's address, urging Arab states to step up their cooperation in energy matters and to adopt

clear energy policies with the help of the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC).

The conference issued a statement at the closing session in Baghdad, urging Arab countries to conserve energy and diversify their economies to cut dependence on oil and gas.

The statement pledged support for Iraq in its war with Iran and urged the international community to implement a U.N. ceasefire call, and Security Council Re-



Hisham Al Khatib solution 598 to end the conflict (See page 6).

Pakistan finance minister to attend OIC meeting

By Nermeen Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Pakistan is sending its Minister of Finance Mahboub Al Haq to the Islamic foreign ministers conference due to open in Amman March 21, according to the Pakistani ambassador in Amman.

Saghir Hussein, a retired army lieutenant-general, told the Jordan Times in an interview Thursday that the Pakistani foreign minister would be attending United Nations-sponsored talks in Geneva on Afghanistan and therefore would not be taking part in the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) meeting in Amman.

Pakistan expects that the Geneva talks will produce agreement in the next 10 days, Hussein said. If no agreement is reached, the Afghan issue will be discussed at length in the Amman meeting, he said.

Afghanistan and Pakistan have agreed on the essentials of Soviet troop withdrawal from Afghanistan, but the Geneva talks are stalled over Pakistan's demand for an end to Soviet military aid to Kabul and for progress towards the formation of a new Kabul

government. Both demands are rejected by Moscow.

Hussein explained that his government calls for a transition government in Afghanistan immediately after a Soviet withdrawal to "avoid unnecessary bloodshed" and until Afghan refugees return to their country and elect their own government.

Hussein described the Amman conference as "very vital" since "it will deal with important issues directly affecting the region." He added that "Pakistan will make a concerted effort in resolving the problems."

The OIC's choice of Amman for holding the conference is an "indication of the Islamic World's faith in Jordan and King Hussein," Hussein said. This faith was strengthened after the successful last November's extraordinary Amman summit, he said.

The ambassador said the Iran-

Iraq war and the Palestinian uprising would top the agenda of the conference.

The Iran-Iraq war has to be discussed at length, he said, because the war is "affecting humanity, touching not only men but women and children also."

He described the Palestinian uprising as the "retaliation of the oppressed against oppression" after years of silence. "Israel has not been fair to the silent people and therefore the conference should exert pressure on the superpowers, which are seen as the leaders of the democratic world, to help us in reaching a solution," he said.

Hussein predicted that the uprising would continue until the Palestinians reach victory because the uprising "is being led by the younger generation and the younger generation's anger is stronger and more enduring than ours (the older generation)."

Hussein's definition of victory for the Palestinians is for them to have "their own government, their own rule in their own country."

The rest is "a family affair which can be decided later," he said. "The most important thing is that they are liberated."

Pakistani ladies to raise funds for martyrs' families in Palestinian uprising

By Nermeen Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The importance of supporting the Palestinian national uprising has moved the Jordan-Pakistan Friendship Association in cooperation with the Jordan Women Federation into planning a fair in order to collect funds for the families of Palestinian martyrs' families.

The two-day fair, which will be under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath, will begin on March 31 at Al Hussein Sports City in Amman and will include interesting activities for all family members.

According to Mrs. Sadega Saghir Hussein, wife of the Pakistani ambassador in Amman, this fair is being held to "express the deep feeling among Pakistani women living in Jordan towards the uprising, and the need to support its continuity until it



Princess Sarvath achieves its purpose."

Hussein added that the Pakistani women have joined hands with Jordanian women to support "the legitimate uprising which is being staged by children who want to win their rights to self determination."

Hussein also said it is common knowledge that everyone in the Islamic World feels with the suffering of Palestinians living in the



Mrs. Sadega Saghir Hussein

occupied Arab territories, but that it is very important to "let them know that these feelings are not only in our hearts and we are also willing to help."

Although Hussein could not say how much money they expect to collect from the fair, but she said "every drop adds to create an ocean," and that this fair will not be the end but "only a first step."

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ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i: Calling for a summit

NOW that there is a quorum for holding an extraordinary Arab summit called for by Algeria, one can hope that all the Arab states would attend the meeting and take part in constructive discussions. The meeting will most probably be devoted to supporting the Palestinian people's uprising in the occupied Arab territories which has been continuously escalating. Needless to say that Jordan and still is the main and staunchest supporter of this uprising materially and politically; and through King Hussein and his tours abroad has won this uprising world-wide support. The King left no stone unturned in the search for peace, and in enlisting European countries' backing for the rights of the Palestinian people. It is natural, therefore, for Jordan to support efforts designed to convene an Arab summit meeting for backing the uprising and for taking a constructive pan-Arab stand for liberating the Arab territories. The uprising, together with efforts of the Arab countries can provide the most essential elements for successful endeavours on the part of the Arab World; and any constructive resolutions to be taken by the Arab leaders are bound to help realise Arab aims.

Al Dustour: Arab coordination

KING Hussein's talks with North Yemen's president Ali Abdullah Saleh are part of Jordan's continued efforts to coordinate Arab countries' stands and rally their forces to confront the serious challenges posed to the Arab Nation. This coordination is essential specially at a time when the Zionist enemy is escalating oppression against the Arab people of Palestine and trying to thwart their uprising. King Hussein who is spearheading the nation's efforts for solidarity and liberation seeks a concerted and unified Arab stand which he considers as the most important and effective guarantee for the Arabs in their confrontation of the looming dangers. The Israeli atrocities against the Palestinian people and the current siege imposed on the Arab inhabitants should prompt all Arabs to seek all possible means for supporting and aiding their brothers under Israeli oppression; and should move the Arabs to help their kinsmen and to end their nightmare. Israel has tried all means for ending the uprising, beating the bones of youth, demolishing their homes and laying siege to refugee camps. These criminal actions ought to be countered by a firm and effective Arab measure that can ensure an end to occupation and the long Arab sufferings.

Sawt Al Shaab: Shamir shuns peace

ISRAELI Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir has ended his talks with U.S. officials in a deadlock because President Reagan has failed to persuade him to accept a U.S. plan for ending the Arab-Israeli conflict. This result came as no surprise to Jordan because Israel has been placing one obstacle after another in the path of all efforts and along the past 30 years to thwart serious attempts to bring peace to the Middle East. Indeed, Israel has been stepping up its expansionist plans and increasing its inhuman practices against the Arab citizens. Ever since U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 has been issued, the United Nations and world organisations and various nations have failed to force Israel to make peace. Shamir's rejection of the latest U.S. proposal will not be the last of Israel's obstacles laid in the path of peace which should be based on the return of Arab lands to their lawful owners. Jordan has been persistent in its efforts to exchange land for peace under a comprehensive and lasting settlement which can come through an international conference in which all concerned parties can take part, but Shamir still insists on partial solutions that can achieve no peace.

Thursday's

Al Ra'i: Campaigning for unity

KING Hussein has resumed his diplomatic moves in the Arab World for unifying Arab countries stands in the face of dangerous threats specially in the face of the Israeli measures against the Palestinian people. His visit to Saudi Arabia and talks with King Fahd Ibn Abdul Aziz and his following visit to North Yemen are intended as part of the Jordanian diplomatic move abroad and a continuation of the monarch's earlier contacts and consultations with the leaders of Egypt, Kuwait, Syria and Iraq. This move is an exercise of Jordan's true and genuine desire to form a unified Arab stand, capable of confronting the challenges that are increasing by the day. The time element in building up a unified stand is very important, and the Arabs ought to take the initiative if they are to achieve any results in their endeavours. They should act now in view of indications that Israel, which is showing continued intransigence is hatching a plot to annihilate the Arab people in the occupied territories after cutting off their telephone communications with the rest of the world. The Arabs should not wait for the catastrophe to take place and then deplore the enemy's actions, but should rather take the initiative and thwart the new Israeli conspiracy.

Al Dustour: Constructive moves

THE King's visit to Saudi Arabia is complementary to those he made to other Arab countries, and the talks in Riyadh are part of the continued Jordanian efforts to arrive at a unified and concerted Arab stand in the face of the fateful challenge. The King's on-going consultations with Arab leaders come as the uprising in the occupied Arab territory is being escalated, and as the Arabs feel that their national responsibility is becoming heavier and more serious. The situation in the occupied Arab territories calls on the Arabs to carry out urgent action designed to support the Palestinian people in the occupied lands who are trying to defend their rights and holy places. There is no doubt that the latest U.S. initiative on the Middle East calls for stepped up diplomatic moves and consultations for the sake of arriving at a common understanding and a common conception of how to deal with it and the new developments in our area. In addition, the current escalation in the Gulf war and the war of cities, call on the Arabs to make constructive moves that aim at ending the conflict in the Gulf and save the lives of innocent civilians.

The Soviet Union's Iran dilemma

By Scheherazade Daneshkhu

EVER since Iran refused to accept Security Council Resolution 598, calling for a ceasefire in the Gulf, there have been incessant reports of an imminent Soviet move to endorse an arms embargo against Iran. And yet, seven months have passed since 598 was first agreed and the arms embargo is still only at the level of discussion.

Despite recent reports that the Soviet Union is about to support a U.N. resolution calling for enforcement measures, it seems highly unlikely that it has changed its policy. And, though there are good reasons why it should support the U.N., there are a number of even better reasons why it does not. These reasons are almost completely dictated by the Soviet Union's standing with its sympathisers in the rest of the world and by strategic considerations, rather than bilateral relations with Iran. This is not to say that Moscow would not wish to enjoy cordial relations with Iran, but rather that Iran's government has shown that hopes for substantive Soviet gains from such a relationship cannot emerge.

The clearest indication of this came roughly three years after the revolution, during which period the Soviet Union supported Iran in the U.N. over the hostage crisis, directed the Tudeh (Communist) party in Iran to cooperate with the emerging theocracy and played down the embarrassing issue of Iranian help to rebel groups in Afghanistan. Yet by 1982, the Tudeh party's newspaper had been shut down as a prelude to a massive crackdown on the party's membership. Over 1,000 members were arrested and, in 1983, the secretary-general of the Tudeh, Nureddin Kianuri, was arrested and finally executed. In addition, Iran started broadcasting to the Muslim population in the southern Soviet provinces from a newly-installed transmitter and open-

ly condemned the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. This led to a political breakdown in the relationship and the stepping-up of Soviet arms supplies to Iraq in the second half of 1982. The economic relationship was not affected to the same degree. Although exports of Iranian oil to the Soviet Union diminished considerably, Soviet technical advisors remained in Iran until the "bombing of the cities" in 1983.

The lesson that the Soviet Union appears to have drawn from its relationship with post-revolutionary Iran is that, whatever it does, it cannot hope for a pro-Soviet tilt under the Islamic Republic. The ideological antagonism to Communism and to "superpower domination," be it American or Soviet, runs too deep in Iran for anything other than relations calculated strictly in terms of Tehran's short-term interests. For this reason, the Soviet Union has contented itself by going back to the "first principles" of its own global interests, namely the reduction of U.S. political and military power worldwide. The revolution in Iran saw an end to U.S. influence in the country and, despite the anti-Soviet character of its government, it therefore represented a net gain to the Soviet Union.

If there is an long-term hope of gaining Iran's friendship, what then is stopping the Soviet Union from endorsing the arms embargo, and thereby securing the approval of the West? In the short-term, the most obvious (and overrated) consideration is Afghanistan. In an interview earlier this month with Japanese television, the speaker of the Iranian parliament, Hashemi Rafsanjani, said that once Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan there would be no "pending issues" between the two countries. Iran would help the USSR in implementing its withdrawal by ensuring the U.S. does not step in afterwards to impose its influ-

ence. No one seems to have asked whether Iran is in a position to make such guarantees. While Pakistan's cooperation is clearly crucial to a settlement, Iran's role in the whole issue is more tenuous. Iran is home to about one million Afghan refugees and has links with at least two of the resistance parties in the north and west of the country, but to argue from this that the Soviet Union is dependent on Iran's cooperation seems something of an exaggeration.

However, although Iran's help may not be crucial, it can certainly play a useful role in the settlement. In the wider context of Soviet-U.S. relations, Gorbachev knows very well that while compliance with the proposed arms embargo against Iran would be welcomed by the U.S., a Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan is of far greater importance to the improvement of their relations. It is likely then, that Iran and the USSR have made a deal to the effect that the Soviet Union stalls on the arms embargo in the Security Council in return for a policy of no hindrance by Iran in Afghanistan.

Beyond this, there is probably a more fundamental reason for the Soviet Union's reticence over the arms embargo. Iran has felt aggrieved by its treatment at the hands of the U.N. ever since Iraq first launched its invasion in September 1980. For example, the Security Council only called for the immediate withdrawal of all forces to the international frontier in July 1982, only two months after Iran had finally succeeded in driving out almost all Iraqi troops from its soil and entering Iraq itself. For this and other reasons, such as the ritual and selective condemnation of Iranian attacks on tankers in the Gulf when in fact Iraq has attacked twice the number of ships, Iran has continued to maintain that U.N. is under the influence of the U.S.'s undoubted hostility to the Islamic Republic.

The Western bias against Iran, whether justified or not, has been acknowledged by such a prominent figure as Sir Brian Urquhart, the recently retired U.N. under secretary-general. Gorbachev, therefore, has had to decide whether he really wants to throw in his lot with Reagan and Thatcher over this issue and effectively endorse the Western position, with all the implications that this would have on the Soviet Union's standing with Third World countries opposed to the U.S.

It has not been an easy position to be in. On the one hand, Moscow wants better relations with the Arab World and has succeeded in establishing diplomatic relations with conservative Gulf states, such as the UAE, Oman and Kuwait, once completely out of bounds for Soviet diplomats. On the other hand, Gorbachev wants the Gulf war to end because of its destabilising potential at a time when he would rather be concentrating on domestic issues. If he does not want to follow the Western path to peace by putting pressure on Iran, then the alternative of pressuring Iraq is also unviable since it would annoy the Arab World.

Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that the USSR has stalled on taking decisive action. Resolution 598 does not mention an arms embargo but calls on the Security Council "meet again as necessary to consider further steps to ensure compliance with this resolution." While Perez de Cuellar is still attempting to negotiate the resolution with Iran and Iraq, the Soviet Union is quite justified in pointing out that it is not yet a dead horse. However many drafts and re-drafts of enforcement measures are examined by the Soviet Union, the odds are long against a Soviet arms embargo against Iran — Middle East International, London.

Syria's military buildup worries Israel

The following article is reprinted from the Israeli newspaper, The Jerusalem Post.

By Elaine Ruth Fletcher

SYRIA has reached a "quantitative" military balance with Israel that could allow it to launch an effective blitzkrieg to retake large parts of the Golan Heights, but not a generalised war, according to Moshe Maoz, the Hebrew University expert on Syria.

Syria's military buildup is one of President Hafez Assad's biggest achievements in his 17 years of power, Maoz said in a lecture at the University's Truman Centre on March 14. Maoz's biography of the Syrian President, Assad, the Sphinx of Damascus, is due to be published in London and New York next month.

Although no one can predict Assad's next move, one option now open to him would be a Yom Kippur II-style attack on the Golan, Maoz said. Assad could thus try to retake large chunks of territory and break the political status quo, as Egypt did in 1973.

"From a technical point of view, Syria could do it," Maoz noted. "In one night it could transform its own defensive line on the Golan into an offensive one, and then make a quick sweep with armoured divisions, while helicopter-borne commandos land behind Israeli lines, creating a

pinch. "It could conquer large parts of the Golan, establish a strong defensive line, and then call for negotiations."

Syria's new military might, which includes a standing army of 500,000 men, is also proving to be an effective deterrent against Israeli attacks.

"Syria is deterring Israel from an attack on it without special provocation or exceptional circumstances," Maoz said. "Top IDF commanders are well aware of the 'heavy price' Israel would be forced to pay in a new confrontation." Maoz added, quoting Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Khaddam, who once remarked, "The next war with Syria won't be a picnic for Israel."

Syria's growing military might has given Assad veto power over various recent U.S. and Israeli-supported peace initiatives, Maoz noted. "Even though Syria can't enforce its demands on Israel, it can block the diplomatic process."

And it has made Syria more able to employ other strategic military options. For instance, Syria successfully waged a war of attrition against Israel through Shi'ite Lebanese allies in 1984-85. More recently, it has encouraged the uprising in the territories, via Syrian-backed Palestinian leaders such as Ahmed Jibril and his Popular Front-General Com-

mand. Jibril, for instance, launched the hang-glider attack on an IDF base in northern Israel that killed six soldiers and helped inspire the uprising in the territories. A Jibril-run radio station broadcasting from Syria or Lebanon has been encouraging the uprising in the territories.

Syria may also have toved with the option of actually provoking an attack from Israel, thus sparking a conflict that would allow it to make military or diplomatic gains, said Maoz.

What strategy will Assad use in his future dealings with Israel — simple deterrence, blitzkrieg, provocation, a war of attrition, or a comprehensive war? Maoz rules out only the option of comprehensive war. "My opinion is that it's too early for him to launch a comprehensive war, and he couldn't do it without the help of another Arab state."

Beyond that, Maoz refuses to make any predictions. "I don't know. Allah doesn't know either," he said. "Assad, the sphinx of Damascus, prepares various options for himself. Various prophets have tried to predict what he would do, but no body can, because so many factors are involved."

In considering, for instance, a blitzkrieg attack on the Golan

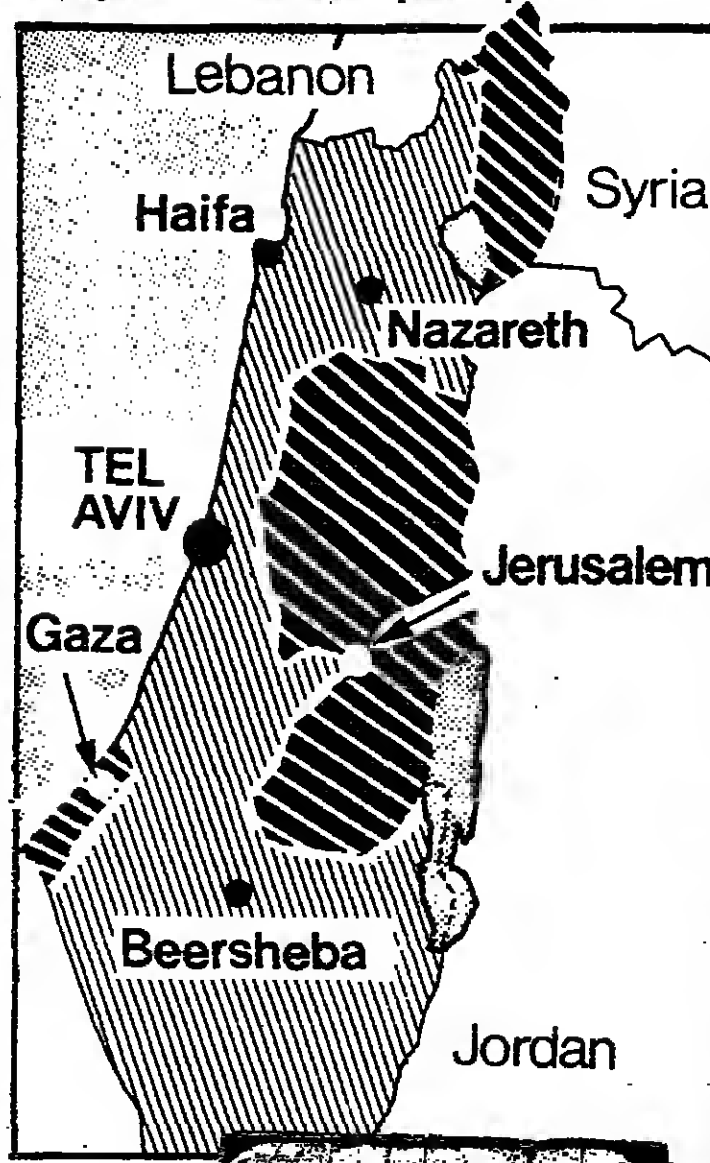
Heights, Assad, the pragmatist, would weigh the cold realities of the U.S., Israeli and Arab responses. Would a war replenish the country's economic coffers or ruin the economy? Would it lead to a comprehensive war beyond Syria's control?

But against those logical considerations stand the musings of Assad the visionary. In this role, Assad is a man who still dreams of a grand design for the conquest of all Israel, said Maoz. He believes that in time the Jewish state will crumble, as did the Crusaders' empire here. He cringes from his loss of the Golan Heights in 1967.

It is not purely by chance that Saladin, the 12th century Muslim who recaptured Palestine from the Crusaders, has become something of an idol in Syria.

"Today, Syria is a regional power equal to Iraq and Egypt. It has turned Lebanon into a protectorate. The youth, the coming generation who grew up on the knees of the Ba'ath regime, are largely loyal to Assad," observed Maoz.

"Does Assad also want to enter Arab history as the new Saladin, at least in the Golan Heights?" Maoz asked. "Will he try or will he be happy with what he has achieved? I want to leave the question open."



OPEN FORUM

Kitschy stuff

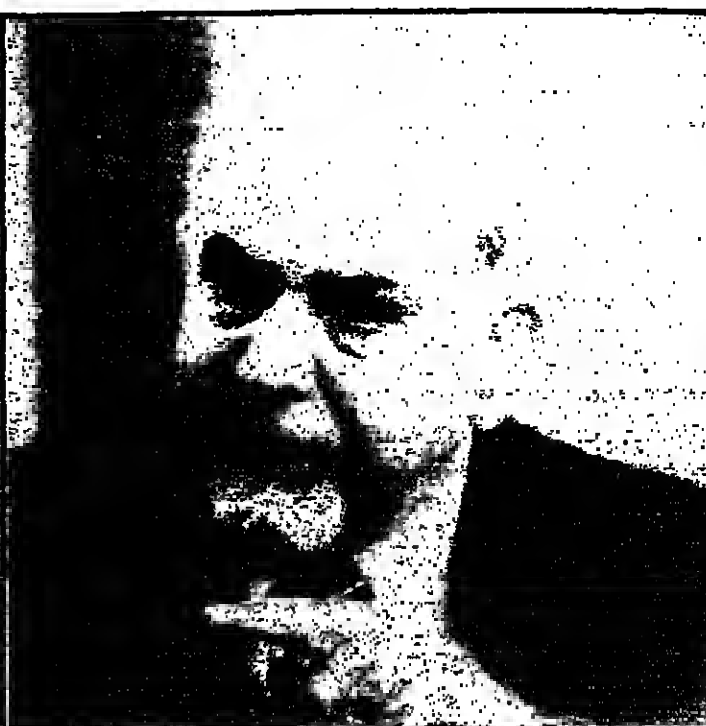
MEN and women alike in our country are really impressed by illustrated magazines and gossip stories. Instead of our younger generation reading history, geography, science or social sciences, many of them read uneducational magazines and books. Entering a bookshop in Amman you find girls and women waiting in turn to buy a magazine like Al Shabaka or Al Mawidha that they can read what is happening between an actor and his girlfriend or a singer and his wife. They are also enthusiastic to know what was the last wedding in town and what were the women in that wedding wearing.

Also in similar bookshops you find men crowding around to read these magazines; in order not to let anybody see them reading the news of an actor or the singer, they stand in corners and turn their backs to you.

In general our younger generation should be much more interested in books; reading this kind of magazine costs a person 750 fils which is a lot of money to pay for gossip. Instead, people can read books or magazines that will cost them less money but are more educational, rather than wasting their time reading magazines of a lower standard.

People should stop reading these magazines and concentrate more on books that can benefit them in the longer term. Also I beg people who are in leadership positions, and who care about the education of our society, to fight the spread of these magazines into our book market.

Fouad N. Batsheh



Zehdi Terzi

Zehdi Terzi: A mild-mannered, hard-working diplomat

By Michael Littlejohns

Reuter

UNITED NATIONS — The United States considers him an embodiment of "terrorism" even though a former American delegate likened him to Santa Claus, yet Zehdi Labih Terzi is known here as a mild-mannered, hard-working diplomat.

Ambassador Terzi, as he is known to those who regard the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as a quasi-state, is its first and only permanent observer here.

If the United States has its way, he will be its last.

Invoking the 1987 anti-terrorism act, U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese has served notice that the PLO mission in New York must close by next Monday.

The United States said its action was "irrespective of any obligations" undertaken in the 1947 agreement that established U.N. headquarters in New York.

Terzi, 64, told reporters that U.S. authorities would have to lock him up before they could "take me away."

He cancelled plans to be in Geneva when the deadline falls. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar has called the American action a clear violation of the headquarters accord and protested strongly. The General Assembly referred the dispute to the World Court. Hearings will begin next month.

In the meantime, there may be another emergency session of the General Assembly on the matter, which goes far beyond the immediate argument whether the PLO may retain its mission.

Diplomats say that U.N. independence is at issue and that if the dispute is not resolved they must consider seriously whether the General Assembly can continue meeting in New York.

Andrew Young, President Jimmy Carter's U.N. ambassador, spoke of "this mild little" guy who looks like Santa Claus" in excusing his unauthorised, clandestine meeting with Terzi in the summer of 1979 that led to Young's resignation.

Israeli diplomats learned of the encounter and denounced Young. Earlier this month, Israel cast the only vote against a General Assembly resolution that called on the United States to rescind plans to close the PLO mission.

Only Israel and the United States regard the PLO as "terrorist." British officials say their government faults the organisation for harbouring "terrorist" elements.

"But there are some of those in the Israeli government, too," a

Briton here remarked. A bustling man who favours conservative, dark suits, Terzi would be an unlikely choice by central casting for a role as terrorist.

He has been a part of the diplomatic community here since he arrived with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, when he addressed the General Assembly in November 1974. Arafat left after 24 hours. Terzi stayed.

After the United Nations invited the PLO to set up an observer mission, Terzi negotiated the million-dollar purchase of a Manhattan townhouse for offices and an official residence. The townhouse is now valued at \$4.5 million, Terzi said.

The PLO pays about \$2,000 a month in real estate taxes, he said, because U.S. authorities accord him no diplomatic immunity. He drives an old Chevrolet, with regular licence plates — no diplomatic privilege there, either.

Terzi travels with a diplomatic passport issued by the Algerian government, but must stand in line, sometimes for an hour or more, at New York's international airport with tourists and returning students to obtain re-entry.

His visa does not permit multiple visits and it often took a week or two to get permission to return to New York, he said. Asked if he anticipated extra hassles in light of the anti-terrorism act, Terzi said the situation could hardly be more aggravating than it is.

While the PLO's problem is with federal authorities, his life is not easy in a city that has a huge Jewish population and a Jewish mayor.

Mayor Edward Koch has called the United Nations "a cesspool" and this past weekend, protesters carrying the Israeli flag gathered outside the PLO mission singing Jewish songs and chanting: "PLO, they have to go."

Terzi is a member of the Greek Orthodox church, said he used to attend its Brooklyn cathedral regularly until his wife, Wafid, died last year after an 11-year battle with cancer. He has two children.

Terzi was the PLO representative in Spain and several Latin American countries before coming here. His Spanish is fluent. In the United Nations, where Arabic is an official language, he prefers to use his tightly accented English, explaining that he can state his case better without interpretation, English being the common U.N. language.

Asked how he likes New York, he replied diplomatically: "Very interesting with a variety of entertainment, culture, brigandage and muggings."

MIDEAST NEWS IN BRIEF

S. Arabia reported to buy Chinese missiles

WASHINGTON (R) — The Washington Post said Friday that China was selling medium-range missiles to Saudi Arabia which could reach any part of the Middle East with a nuclear warhead. But both countries said the missiles would not be used for nuclear purposes, the newspaper added. The Chinese CSS-2 class surface-to-surface missile, with a maximum range of 3,500 kilometres, could permit Saudi Arabia to exert more influence on disputes such as the Gulf war and Arab-Israeli conflicts, the Washington Post said. Saudi Arabia had assured the United States that it did not have or intend to acquire nuclear capability and China had assured Washington it would not sell nuclear weapons to any other country, the newspaper reported. But the State Department said the United States believed Saudi acquisition of such a weapon was not in the interests of peace and stability in the Middle East, the newspaper added.

Ivory Coast closes Beirut embassy

BEIRUT (R) — Ivory Coast is to close its embassy in Lebanon in protest at the killing of up to 16 Africans in east Beirut last month and to avoid further attacks, official sources said Friday. "Due to attacks launched against Africans and the Ivory Coast embassy, and for fear of similar assaults in future, the embassy decided to close its doors for the time being," said a note from the mission to the Lebanese Foreign Ministry. The source, who made the note available to Reuters, said the decision would go into effect Monday. It was taken despite a promise by President Amin Gemayel to Ivory Coast Ambassador Koudou Aziebo Amel that measures would be taken to protect Africans in the city after a wave of murders and two bomb attacks on the embassy. No casualties were reported from either bombing.

Tunisia, Iran said to pursue contacts

TUNIS (R) — Tunisia, which broke diplomatic ties with Iran nearly a year ago, has had a series of contacts with Tehran aimed at improving relations, according to a senior Tunisian Foreign Ministry official. But Tunisia is insisting that Iran accept a ceasefire in its war with Iraq before possibly renewing ties, the official said Wednesday. "We have had contacts on several occasions with the Iranians at their request," said the official, without giving details. "We think we can only strengthen relations and renew them in the framework of Iran's acceptance of peace (in the Gulf war)," he added. Tunisia severed ties with Iran in March last year, accusing Tehran of supporting a clandestine network of Islamic fundamentalists seeking to topple the Tunisian government.

Ozal visit to Baghdad in balance

ANKARA (R) — Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Ozal is going ahead with plans to visit Baghdad April 1 but the trip could be jeopardised by developments in the Iran-Iraq war, according to Foreign Ministry sources. The latest upsurge in the "war of the cities" started when Ozal was visiting Tehran at the end of February and some sources believe the Iraqi trip should be put off if attacks continue. "Ozal's visit to Baghdad might be re-evaluated at this stage of recent developments," Foreign Minister Mesut Yilmaz told Harriyet, Turkey's biggest selling daily. Turkey mediated a brief halt in the attacks on civilian centres, but the two-day truce ended Sunday with a further upsurge of missile and air raids.

PLO chairman attends brother's funeral in Cairo

CAIRO (Agencies) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat walked arm-in-arm with Egyptian ministers in Cairo Friday to mourn his elder brother Mustafa.

Surrounded by a tight ring of security men, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) chairman accepted condolences from Prime Minister Atef Sedki, Foreign Minister Esmat Abdul Meguid and Egyptian opposition leaders.

Mustafa Arafat, one of several family members living in the Egyptian capital, died in a Cairo hospital of cancer Thursday, aged 65.

He had been in Cairo for 40 years and was not involved in politics, Palestinian sources said. His only known official position was chairman of the Palestinian Automobile Club.

Arafat arrived in Cairo Thursday night, 24 hours after talks at his Tunis base with Egyptian

President Hosni Mubarak's political adviser, Osama Baz, on the Palestinian uprising in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza.

Mubarak, who last met Arafat two months ago in Baghdad, did not attend the funeral. He was accompanied by visiting United Arab Emirates (UAE) President Sheikh Zayed Ibn Sultan Al Nahayan on a tour of the Sinai peninsula (see story below).

Later Friday, Arafat and Abdul Meguid discussed current peace efforts in the Middle East.

Abdul Meguid told reporters after the talks that they discussed the situation in the Middle East and current peace efforts.

Foreign Ministry sources said they discussed U.S. peace proposals which call for an international conference to launch separate talks on interim Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza.

Zayed's visit brings UAE and Egypt closer

CAIRO (R) — The president of Egypt paid his United Arab Emirates counterpart the rare honour of travelling with him on private visits in Egypt Thursday.

It seemed to be Hosni Mubarak's way of thanking Sheikh Zayed Ibn Sultan Al Nahayan, whose country was the first of 11 Arab states to restore ties with Egypt last year after an eight-year break.

Their journey together to the Sinai town of Sharm Al Sheikh also appeared to point to fruitful future relations.

Long talks between Sheikh Zayed and Mubarak during an official visit which ended Wednesday produced prospects of closer partnership in arms production and in tackling Arab problems, Arab diplomats said.

Sheikh Zayed, on his first trip to Egypt in a decade, made no secret of his support for Mubarak.

An Arab League summit in Amman last November freed member states to restore relations collectively severed after Egypt's treaty with Israel in 1979.

The isolation of Egypt from the rest of the Arabs has left the Arab World at a loss," Sheikh Zayed said in an interview with Cairo's weekly Al-Mussawwar last week.

The UAE president said the U.S.-brokered Camp David accord between Egypt and Israel which led to the 1979 treaty was a natural result of successive wars.

"Every war ends with peace... no war lasts forever, as long as peace restores my land and rights," he said.

Sheikh Zayed also supports Egypt's return to the Arab League, from which it was suspended. "Egypt does not need the league, it is the Arabs who need Egypt in the league," he said.

Commander says UNIFIL may be compelled to quit

BEIRUT (AP) — The commander of the U.N. peacekeeping force in South Lebanon has hinted the nine-nation force might be forced to leave the country, citing in part the abduction of U.S. Marine Lieutenant-Colonel William Higgins.

Major General Gustave Haggund of Finland spoke at a medal parade ceremony Thursday in the Irish battalion headquarters of the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) on St. Patrick's Day.

"Peacekeeping can only work when there is a will for peace and the rule of the peacekeepers is respected. If not, we have no rule and can only wish the people of this area good luck," Haggund said. "You will need it."

Ireland's Minister of State Vincent Brady, who doubles as deputy defence minister, flew to Lebanon to be on hand at the UNIFIL ceremony in the southern Lebanese village of Tibnin.

Higgins, chief of the 76-member observer group-Lebanon attached to Haggund's 5,800-strong UNIFIL, was kidnapped near the southern Lebanese city of Tyre on Feb. 17.

A pro-Iranian group calling itself the Organisation of the Oppressed on Earth claimed responsibility for his abduction, charging he spied for the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). U.S. and U.N. officials have denied the charge.

In his 15-minute speech, Haggund also rejected the espionage charge.

"Accusations were made against Col. Higgins that were clearly false," he said. "What seems to have been mainly held against him is his nationality. This I cannot accept."

"Higgins is a United Nations

officer as the Irish battalion is a United Nations battalion. An attack on either is an attack on the United Nations. Let there be no doubt."

Haggund said Higgins' continuous captivity was a "matter that remains a deep concern."

Haggund had clamped restrictions on the movement of U.N. personnel in South Lebanon since Higgins' abduction. He also withdrew 20 officers from positions abutting Shi'ite-populated areas and stationed the farther south, along the Lebanon-Israel border.

Higgins was the first U.N. officer to be abducted since UNIFIL force deployed in South Lebanon in 1978.

Haggund told the Visnews television news agency that a search for Higgins was difficult as the kidnappers had proved to be well organised.

Haggund said UNIFIL mounted a week-long manhunt for the American because "we had reason to believe he was in our area of operation, but then it became evident he was already brought out from the area."

"We know he is north of Litani (river) now. Still in the south but north of Litani and it is very difficult for us to act in that area," added Haggund.

The Litani, which flows into the Mediterranean eight kilometres north of the port of Tyre, is the northern boundary of the zone policed by UNIFIL.

Southern Lebanon north of the Litani includes the Nabatiyah area, which is controlled by pro-Iranian militants of the Hizbollah movement.

Hizbollah is believed to be behind the abduction of some of the 26 foreigners missing and believed kidnapped in Lebanon.

Sudan cabinet, judiciary tussle over protest rally

KHARTOUM (R) — The Sudanese government, its own future in the balance, has become embroiled in an embarrassing tussle with the judiciary that has led the largely-ceremonial joint presidency to intervene.

A statement broadcast Friday by state Radio Omdurman said the five-man Supreme Council, the collective presidency, had asked Prime Minister Sadeq Al Mahdi's government to apologise to the judiciary for the behaviour of Cabinet Affairs Minister Salah Abdul Salam.

Abdul Salam, a close aide of Mahdi, was reported to have angrily protested last Saturday to the head of the judiciary, Mohammad Mirghani Mabrouk, for allowing a protest march in Khartoum to go ahead despite a government ban.

Mabrouk, according to press reports, threatened to arrest Abdul Salam on charges of contempt when the minister slammed his office door after a heated argument.

More than 10,000 people marched through the capital last Saturday to protest at the reported presence in western Sudan of Libyan-backed foreign forces fighting the government in neighbouring Chad.

Mahdi and other ministers of his Umma Party, which has close ties to Libya and is the senior partner in the ruling coalition, say all foreign forces have left Sudan.

The demonstration was led by members of parliament from the main opposition National Islamic Front and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), Umma's main coalition partner. The DUP has voiced concern at Umma ties with Libya.

Friday's controversy over Abdul Salam came three days before parliament was due to begin a crucial debate on a reform programme proposed by Mahdi.

Mahdi, elected in May 1986 after the first democratic polls for 18 years, said Tuesday he wanted to form a broader-based government to carry through reforms aimed at ending the civil war in the south and reviving the economy.

He said he would resign if parliament rejected his programme.

A cabinet statement broadcast by state radio said the government had the utmost respect for the judiciary and pledged to maintain its independence.

"If it has been understood by some that the cabinet affairs minister wanted to compromise the independence of the judiciary, the cabinet's general secretary would like to assert on behalf of the minister that he did not mean to," it said.

It said the cabinet would investigate the circumstances in which the ban on the march was ignored.

North cited Reagan authority for mission

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The Washington Post said Friday that fired White House aide Oliver North sent a U.S. businessman to Canada in 1986 with \$100,000 as ransom for a U.S. hostage in Lebanon — and with a letter saying he was acting on behalf of President Reagan.

It said the businessman, courier, Jay Coburn, needed the letter because travellers could not take more than \$10,000 out of the United States without filing a statement.

Coburn was to hand the money in Montreal to a Canadian of Armenian descent who said he could win the release of Peter Kilburn, an American University of Beirut (AUB) — librarian in Lebanon who had been taken hostage in 1984, the newspaper said.

It said the money was a down payment on a \$1 million ransom for Kilburn, but three months later Kilburn was turned over to a pro-Libyan group and killed in apparent retaliation for the U.S. bombing of Libya.

The Washington Post said North's letter raised again the question of authority for North's actions because it said Coburn was "acting on official U.S. government business on behalf of the president of the United States."

Possible prison sentence

North and his former boss John Poindexter face possible prison terms after being indicted in the Iran-contra scandal but Reagan

could step in and pardon them. North, 44, and Poindexter, 51, former National Security Council advisers, were indicted Wednesday on charges of conspiring to defraud the government by diverting profits from U.S. arms sales to Iran to Nicaragua contra rebels.

North, the alleged mastermind behind the Iran-contra deal, could be sentenced to up to 85 years in prison and fined \$4 million and Poindexter, a retired rear admiral, for up to 40 years and fined \$1.75 million if convicted on all charges.

But jury trials may not result in stiff sentences. North won substantial public sympathy when he defended his actions at congressional hearings last year as an effort to carry out Reagan's policy of supporting the contras.

The indictment did not directly allude to Reagan's statements that the diversion of Iran arms profits to the contras at a time

when Congress had outlawed U.S. aid to the Nicaraguan rebels, was carried out without his knowledge.

North, choking back tears and wearing his marine corps uniform and medals, told a news conference after the indictment Wednesday: "I did not commit any crimes."

He said he was a victim of a battle between Reagan and Congress over support for the contras and would fight the charges.

The indictment raised anew the question of whether Reagan will pardon his former aides after the November presidential election and before he steps down as president early next year.

He has refused to rule out pardons for key figures in the affair.

Also named in the indictment were two arms dealers, retired Air Force Major General Richard Secord, 54, and business partner Albert Hakim, 51, both

of whom worked at North's direction.

Charges

The 23-count indictment accused the four of "deceitfully exploiting for their own purposes" the arms sales "rather than pursuing solely the specified governmental objectives of the initiative, including the release of Americans being held hostage in Lebanon."

They acted "deceitfully, without legal authorisation, organising, directing and concealing a programme to continue funding and other support for the contras," it added.

It said \$8 million of \$30 million in Iran arms profits remained unaccounted for and said the four "unlawfully, wilfully and knowingly did embezzle, steal and convert to their own use" some of the money.

Reagan acknowledged approving secret U.S. arms sales to Iran.

Continued from page one

'Soviets should have arbitration power'

(Continued from page 1)

"We hope that this meeting will become a tradition," he said.

In the three days of the dialogue, participants discussed 10 papers on Arab-Soviet relations and the Soviet policy towards the Arab World.

Papers submitted by Soviet scholars focused on the evolution of Soviet policies in line with political developments in the Arab World and changes in East-West relations.

The papers of Arab writers explained the Arab view of Soviet

policies and how they affected the major conflicts in the region, particularly the Palestinian question and the Gulf war.

In general, the discussion took two directions. The first was very ideological, particularly during when Dr. K.M. Trutvitsen, head of the Institute for African Studies, presented a paper on the policy of Soviet "reconstruction" (perestroika) launched by Kremlin leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

The ideological debate was basically confined among Arab Marxist political scientists and politicians who tried to explore the implications of Gorbachev's drive on the international communist movement and the region.

The Arab thinkers included non-committed scholars as well as members of various Arab communist parties.

The second level of discussion was among non-Marxist thinkers, some Arab officials and Soviet scholars on the practical implications of the new Soviet thinking on Moscow's stand on the Arab-Israeli conflict and Iran-Iraq war.

OIC agenda talks begin today

(Continued from page 1)

Africa rules in defiance of U.N. resolutions.

The Philippine government has appealed to the OIC to give President Corason Aquino time to grant autonomy to Muslim areas in southern Philippines in accordance with the provisions of the 1987 Philippine Constitution.

A statement issued by Philippine Ambassador to Jordan Juan Saez Friday renewed earlier diplomatic representation Manila had made with all member states of the OIC not to allow the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) to be given membership in the Amman meeting and future OIC gatherings.

"While the Philippine government is confident that the MNLF will not be granted membership because it is not a state, the OIC meetings, however, had been passing resolutions calling on the Philippine government to grant autonomy to Muslim areas in southern Philippines," the ambassador's statement said.

"But the dilemma is, while the MNLF wants the grant of autonomy before the Amman meeting, the Philippine government is duty bound to implement the Philippine constitution," which requires that the Philippine congress enact an organic law

granting autonomy to the region and the law will have to be approved by the people in the affected area in a referendum, the ambassador said.

Among other important items in the OIC agenda is international terrorism of all types and forms, and conditions of Muslims in non-OIC member states. The conference will also consider conflicts within the Muslim World and will examine cooperation between the OIC and other regional and international organisations.

Among the topics of legal nature, the conference will particularly study a draft document on human rights in Islam as was recommended by the fifth Islamic summit conference held in Kuwait in January 1987.

The conference will deal with 19 items related to economic issues. It will study the world economic situation with special reference to the problems of the Islamic states, a plan of action to strengthen the economic cooperation among OIC member states.

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Palestinian uprising marks 100 days

(Continued from page 1)

Palestinian flags, chanting slogans and throwing stones.

Israeli occupation authorities have banned fuel supplies to the West Bank, imposed overnight curfews on the Gaza Strip, cut international telephone links with the occupied areas and forced shops to close during hours permitted for business by strike organisers.

The clandestine Unified National Leadership of the Uprising has called for a "day of fierce confrontation" next Monday to mark the anniversary of a 1968 Israeli raid on Palestinian camps.

An independent study by an Israeli demographer found the number of Palestinians in the occupied territories to be 22 per cent higher than official Israeli figures.

Meron Benvenisti said the combined Arab population in the West Bank and Gaza was 1.74 million, not 1.42 million as stated by the government. His ratio of Jews to Arabs in Israel and the territories is 59:41, not 62:38 as the government says.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) reported Friday that more than 400 Palestinian refugees were injured by Israeli forces this week in the Gaza Strip.

A press statement by the agency's office in Cyprus said this raised "to well over 900 the casualties reported by UNRWA's Gaza field office so far this month."

It added that the casualties included a 60-year-old blind woman in Nuseirat who was shot and injured by rubber bullets.

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Arab energy conference urges cutting dependence on oil, gas

BAGHDAD (R) — An Arab energy conference Thursday urged Arab states to conserve energy and diversify their economies to cut dependence on oil and gas.

A statement at the end of the four-day meeting urged "rationalisation of domestic energy consumption and growth of non-oil economic sectors" to spare Arab economies damage from oil price fluctuations.

Most Arab economies plunged into recession when world oil prices began to decline in 1982, crippling development spending and foreign aid.

The Arab World owns early 60 per cent of world crude oil reserves and depends heavily on oil revenue to finance state spending.

But 90 per cent of the oil wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few Gulf Arab states — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq

and the United Arab Emirates. Experts warned that without greater cooperation between the oil-rich and oil-poor and alternatives to oil and gas, many Arab states will face serious energy shortages in the next century.

Already, 11 of 21 Arab states are net importers of refined oil products while domestic Arab energy consumption is growing by an average five per cent annually.

The conference urged Arab states to study wind, solar and nuclear power and boost use of natural gas, a cheap fuel for electricity generation.

It proposed ambitious schemes to transport Algerian and Gulf Arab gas to neighbour-

ing states, and to make better use of Arab refining capacity.

One paper studied the refining of Gulf Arab crude oil in North African refineries with excess capacity.

Cooperation was also urged in training, exchange of information, production and refining technologies and development of petrochemical industries.

The conference called for continued efforts to develop vast oil and gas reserves in the Arab World, which totalled 507 billion barrels of crude oil and 21 trillion cubic metres of gas at the end of 1987.

The Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) estimated reserves could be boosted by another 150 billion barrels of crude oil and 15 trillion cubic metres of gas through new discoveries. Advanced recovery techniques could stretch out the reserves even further.

British trade team begins promotion visit to Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — A British trade delegation representing 13 engineering and industrial firms in the United Kingdom has arrived in Amman on a five-day visit to Jordan.

The Engineering Industrial Association (EIA) in Britain is sponsoring the visit during which the group will meet a number of Jordanian officials, businessmen and industrialists.

The EIA, which has some 3,000 members, has been responsible for more than 100 missions over the past 10 years, and export orders generated by its members over the past five years come to £2 billion.

The group represents industrial gases, electronic components and spares, mechanical seals and power transmission couplings, pumps, auto-electrical replacement parts, low voltage electrical distribution equipment, machine and hand tools and lighting equipment.

JAMPCO halts garlic imports

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan Agricultural Marketing and Processing Company (JAMPCO) will not import any amount of green or dry garlic in order to support local production, JAMPCO Director General Ghazi Abu Hassan said here Thursday.

Abu Hassan noted that JAMPCO warehouses now contain no dry garlic because the company had sold the remaining quantities by the end of last month.

He added that JAMPCO does not plan to import any garlic until all the quantities in the markets have been consumed.

Abu Hassan appealed to local farmers to refrain from harvesting green garlic before it ripens and said that JAMPCO will continue to adopt measures designed to preserve stable prices that would encourage growers to increase output and make Jordan self sufficient in garlic.

Similar measures, he said, are being adopted to support growers of onions and potatoes.

Swiss economic delegation to visit Jordan Thursday

AMMAN (Petra) — A Swiss trade and economic delegation is due here on March 24 on a week long visit to Jordan during which matters related to promoting Swiss-Jordanian trade will be discussed.

An official announcement said that the delegation members will meet with the ministers of industry, trade and supply, planning, energy and mineral resources, and other officials.

The delegation will also tour the Jordan Valley projects, the Dead Sea, the Jordan Fertilizer Industry Company in Azaba, the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company projects, the Royal Scientific Society (RSS), the Amman Financial Market and the Amman Chamber of Industry.

Sudan renews oil exploration

BAGHDAD (R) — Sudan will soon sign its third oil and gas exploration concession in less than a year as part of a renewed drive to become an oil producer, Energy Minister Adam Moussa Madibu has said.

He told Reuters in an interview that Sudan early this month signed an agreement with the Swiss firm Panico to explore for natural gas in the Red Sea off the town of Sawakin over an area of 13,000 square kilometres.

He expected another concession to be granted soon for an area in the northwestern corner of Sudan near the Libyan, Chadian and Egyptian borders.

"We are studying proposals and hope to reach agreement with one or more firms in the next few weeks," he said.

Amoco, Conoco and American Global Resources of the United States and a United Arab Emirates firm Madibu did not name are in the running for the new concession in the northwest.

Arabs pledge \$267m for 117 Egyptian projects

CAIRO (R) — Arab businessmen have offered to help finance 117 new industrial, farming and tourism projects in Egypt, a senior Egyptian official has said.

Mohammed Al Ghanib, deputy chairman of the General Authority for Investment and Free Zones, told the final session of an investment conference that more than 350 investors, mainly from Gulf states, offered to contribute.

The authority asked investors at the government-sponsored meeting to buy shares or offer credits to fund 79 projects worth a total of \$2.1 billion. They also suggested their own projects.

Ghanib said \$267 million of new money had been agreed and others were still coming in.

"This conference is a real starting point toward Arab solidarity in economic development," he was quoted as saying by the national Middle East News Agency.

The meeting was organised after most Arab states restored diplomatic relations with Egypt four months ago, having broken them off to protest Cairo signing a peace treaty with Israel in 1979.

IMF team ends visit

Senior International Monetary Fund (IMF) officials ended talks with the Egyptian government on its economic reforms Thursday and left town as silently as they arrived.

IMF sources said a three-member team from the fund led by Middle East Director Abdul Shakor Shalalan had returned to Washington to report to Managing Director Michel Camdessus.

No information was available on progress of their mission — seen by Western diplomats as a final review of Egyptian economic measures under a standby credits deal agreed last May.

It was up to Camdessus to decide what measures to take next, the sources said.

His decision is considered vital for Egypt's management of its debt-strained economy over the next two years.

The IMF has been disappointed by the pace of Egyptian reforms since last May.

Without fund endorsement of its measures to streamline exchange rates, raise domestic interest rates, narrow the budget deficit and reduce state subsidies, it will be hard for Cairo to win new rescheduling of its \$43.9 billion debt.

Egypt's current rescheduling accord with the Paris Club of Western government creditors, agreed after last May's IMF package, expires on June 30.

Western experts say Egypt is expected to apply for fresh payments relief from July until the end of next year, but this will be in jeopardy if the IMF does not give its economic management another seal of approval.

WEEKLY ANALYSIS

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET

AMMAN (Petra) — The average daily trading in shares amounted to JD 401,007 last week whereas the total volume stood at JD 3,005,037.

A total of 1,701,620 shares changed hands through 1,804 transactions concluded at the market in the past week.

The industrial sector's volume was JD 1,100,204 representing nearly 54.9 per cent of the total volume of trading throughout the week.

The banking sector, which accounted for a total of JD 623,049, or 31.1 per cent of the total, registered an increase of 18.4 per cent over the previous week's figures.

The services sector amounted to 11.9 per cent of the total volume of trading, thus registering a six per cent increase over the figures of the past week.

The insurance sector's share of the total stood at 2.1 per cent. Share prices in the banking and services sectors were stable but a decline was registered for some companies in the insurance and industrial sectors in the last two days of the past week.

The general price index closed at 116.9 points compared to an opening of 117.6 points at the start of the week, thus showing a retreat of 0.7 points.

Shares of 65 companies were traded last week with 10 companies showing a rise in share prices, 40 others registering a decline while the remaining 15 maintaining stability.

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midday on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One Sterling	1.8235/45	U.S. dollar
One U.S. dollar	1.2490/2500	Canadian dollar
	1.6940/50	Deutschemark
	1.9015/25	Dutch guilders
	1.4020/30	Swiss francs
	35.35/40	Belgian francs
	5.7470/7500	French francs
	1253/1254	Italian lire
	128.33/43	Japanese yen
	5.9830/80	Swedish crowns
	6.3780/3830	Norwegian crowns
	6.4880/4930	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	443.00/443.50	U.S. dollars

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

SYDNEY — Share prices hit post-crash highs in early trading and, despite falling back later, closed stronger with gains in all sectors. The All Ordinaries index was up 32.2 at 1,414.7.

TOKYO — Prices closed higher in robust trade although early optimism on U.S. trade data was tempered by a Bank of Japan warning that the stock market was rising too quickly. The Nikkei index rose 93.97 to 25,966.26.

HONG KONG — Stocks closed higher in active trading encouraged by reports of higher profits by big property firms. The Hang Seng index rose 26.27 to 2,607.60.

SINGAPORE — The market closed mixed in fairly active trading. Prices were higher initially following a rise on Wall Street and a firmer Tokyo market but fell back on profit-taking. The Straits Times industrial index rose 1.11 to 959.79.

FRANKFURT — Shares closed higher for the fourth day running in active trading, as the firmer dollar encouraged domestic and foreign investors. The Commerzbank index, calculated at mid-session, rose 26 to 1,457.5.

ZURICH — Prices closed firmer but below the day's highs. Trading was spurred by the stronger dollar and the overnight gain on Wall Street. The All Share Swiss index was up 5.7 at 863.4.

LONDON — Prices reached new highs in late trading, buoyed by a flurry of real-time buying for the new account. At 1530 GMT the FTSE 100 index was up 23.3 at 1,851.4.

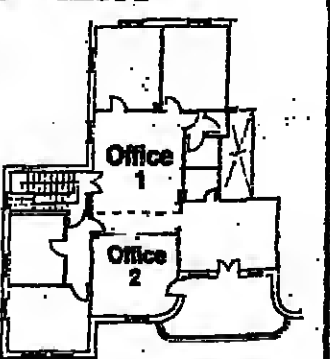
NEW YORK — Stocks generally showed modest gains but Firestone jumped more than \$15 after a merger agreement. The Dow was up eight at 2,094.

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Egypt lowers oil prices

CAIRO (R) — Egypt announced a 75-cent cut in its crude oil prices Thursday, the second reduction in two weeks that brought them to a 16-month low.

A spokesman for the state-owned Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation said top quality Suez and Ras Bahar blends would now sell for \$13.25 a barrel, their lowest level since November 1986.

Prices for all grades were earlier cut by \$1 for the first half of March, in an apparent attempt to keep Egypt's share of a glutted world market.

Oil is a major foreign exchange earner for Egypt, which last week called a meeting in London of non-OPEC producers to discuss the downturn in world prices.

No statements have been made at the meeting, attended by representatives from Angola, China, Malaysia, Oman, Colombia, Mexico and Egypt. But one official said it was continuing at the Mexican embassy.

Oil Minister Abdul Hadi Kandael said last week Egypt would be prepared to cut output if members of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and non-OPEC nations acted jointly to curb production.

Egypt says it produces 870,000 barrels a day, of which about a third is exported.

An official of one of the countries attending the London talks said in the British capital Thursday: "It's an open-ended informal meeting of experts who have

a number of items on their agenda."

"They are not here to make any decisions, but to report back to their governments with a general consensus on how to react to the situation (of low oil prices)," he noted.

Spot oil markets remain weak, although above 16-month lows seen earlier this month, London traders said Thursday.

North Sea Brent crude traded for May delivery at \$14.83 a barrel in Europe Thursday afternoon, after changing hands below \$14.40 in the morning.

London traders said prices had sagged on reports that prevailing glut had now forced Saudi Arabia to offer discounts on OPEC's official \$18 a barrel to Japanese customers.

But traders then decided that fears that the trouble in Panama might disrupt supplies to the U.S. east coast might influence the U.S. market.

"There are two camps in the market right now," said one, the Panama camp, and the European camp. The European camp is much more bearish.

Reports of Saudi Arabia's offer to Japan of "market-related" prices emanated from industry sources in Tokyo. They said it offered customers a formula linked to monthly average spot prices for Oman and Dubai crude plus 25 cents a barrel for its Arab light crude, and the Oman-Dubai average less a dollar for its less-prized heavy grades.

United Saudi Commercial Bank reports loss

RIYADH (R) — United Saudi Commercial Bank (USCB) reported Thursday a 1987 net loss of 14.8 million riyals (\$3.9 million), the second of Saudi Arabia's joint-venture banks in the red during the year.

The Riyadh-based bank trimmed losses slightly after 1986's net deficit of 16.0 million riyals (\$4.3 million), but underlying earnings fell 20 per cent and new provisions against bad and doubtful loans were reduced by 45.5 per cent.

Results so far have been mixed, with four banks increasing profits, but Saudi British Bank sliding into the red and posting a 4.4 million riyal (\$1.2 million) loss.

Saudi banks have been hard hit by non-performing loans.

A USCB spokesman said the bank had now provided for 27 per cent of its outstanding loan book following a comprehensive analysis of its lending during 1986. Bankers said that ranks it among the best provided banks in the kingdom.

A 60.0 million riyal (\$16 million) allocation for provisions in 1986 was abnormally high, he said, with last year's level of 32.7 million (\$8.7 million) reverting to a more normal amount.

The bank spokesman said lower operating revenues was due to a lower return on the bank's investment portfolio last year after an extremely good 1986 and to a higher cost of funds.

The bank's total assets rose 10.7 per cent to 4.3 billion riyals (\$1.1 billion).

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AMMAN LITTLE LEAGUE BASKETBALL FINAL STANDINGS



Junior champion — Dorna team

Junior Teams
Champion
Runner-up
3rd place
4th place
5th place

Dorna
Nash/EBB
Arab Bank
Samar
Astra



Mids-1 champion — NECC team

Mids-1 Teams
Champion
Runner-up
3rd place
4th place
5th place

NECC
Intercon
Danish Dairy
Istiklal
EEE



Mids-2 champion — Jor-Exp team

Mids-2 Teams
Champion
Runner-up
3rd place
4th place
5th place

Jor-Exp
Marriott
Furukawa
NEP
GEMT



Senior champion — France Lait team

Senior Teams
Champion
Runner-up
3rd place
4th place
5th place

France Lait
JWM
La Vache Qui Rit
Al-Ahlyah
Westinghouse

GOREN BRIDGE

BY CHARLES GOREN
AND OMAR SHARIF
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A KNAVISH DEFENSE

Neither vulnerable, South deals.

NORTH
♠ 7 6 4
♥ 9 2
♦ 9 6 2
♣ 9 7 5 3

EAST
♠ K 5
♥ Q 10 9 8 3
♦ Q 10 7 6 3
♣ A Q 4

SOUTH
♠ A 7 5
♥ A 3 5
♦ K 10 7 5 3
♣ K 4

The bidding:
South West North East
1 NT 2♦ 3♦ 4♦
Pass

Opening lead: Six of ♣.
Styles change: The old-fashioned treatment of a double of an opening bid of one no trump showed the equivalent of a one no trump opener. The new method is to show a hand that is capable of defeating one no trump; it can be weaker than a one no trump opener but, in that case, it contains a good, long suit that can be developed by giving up one trick in the suit. The theory is that you seldom get a strong, balanced hand when someone has already shown 16-18 points, and the second-type of holding crops up with much greater frequency.

Fortunately for East-West, a pair of rubber bridge players of long standing, they did not put much store in these new-fangled ideas. They abided by the methods which had stood them in good stead over the years, so West had no problem about what to do after South opened the bidding with one no trump. East knew his side held the balance of power and passed with relief.

West made his normal lead of his fourth-best heart, and East's king forced the ace. Declarer had no option but to try to establish diamond tricks, so he led the king in the hope that he might pick off a singleton queen — a singleton ace would not have helped him.

In with the ace of diamonds, West found a masterly defense. He shifted to the jack of clubs! There was no counter to this brilliant sally. East signalled with the eight and declarer could not hold up. He won with the king and resumed his effort to set up diamonds. But it was easy for West, after winning the queen, to trust his partner and continue with a low club. East put his entry to good use by reverting to hearts, trapping declarer's jack.

When the smoke cleared, the defenders had collected four heart tricks, two diamonds and three clubs for 500 points.

THE BETTER HALF. By Harris



"I've been dieting for 15 years and I've gained 45 pounds. Maybe I'm part of a real long 'Candid Camera' prank."

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

SEERA
MESAU
CUSPER
TRULIA

WHAT A GOOD RULER IS SUPPOSED TO DO.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here:

Yesterday's Jumbles: RAVEN GUMBO LEVITY CUDGEL.
Answer: How they knew that the man-eating shark had been shot dead — THERE WAS A "BULLET-IN".

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 1988

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

From the Carroll Richter Institute

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Consult with some progressive, creative friends about how you can best improve the efficiency of your workplace. Maintain a positive attitude today, and you could make some valuable new contacts.

ARIES (Mar. 21 to Apr. 19): Spend some time discussing with your mate how you will proceed with your plans for the future. Get plenty of rest this evening.

TAURUS (Apr. 20 to May 20): You can make your mate extremely happy this evening with just a smile and a hug. Use your energy in only positive directions.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 21): Listen to the ideas given to you by a clever friend; these are really very good ones. Go out with your family this evening.

MOON CHILDREN (June 22 to Jul. 21): If you handle your work in a very competent manner, you will come to the attention of a superior who can help you advance.

LEO (Jul. 22 to Aug. 21): You can finish up a project you have been working on for a long time with a little help from a friend. Use the creative side of your nature.

VIRGO (Aug. 22 to Sept. 22): A family friend can help you get your home in better running order. Be sure to drive very carefully all day, and especially during the evening.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): A partner may seem to be acting too badly, but this person will still get the right results, so don't do anything which could interfere.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): A new co-worker can be very helpful to you, so accept this person gracefully. Take time for recreation when your work is finished.

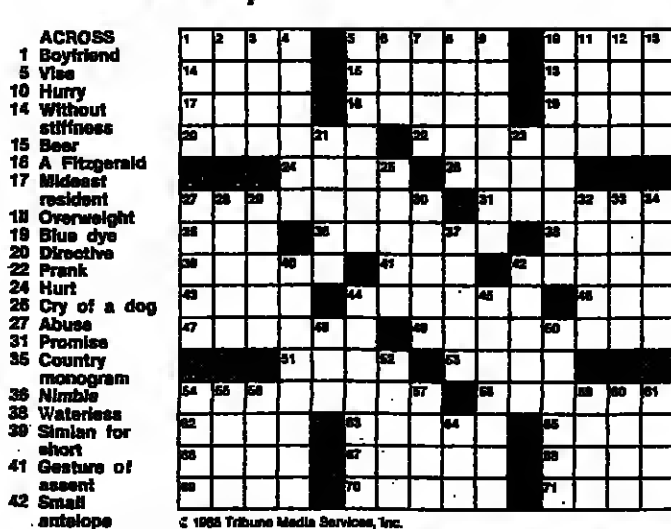
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Get into some new types of recreation which will make your spare time more enjoyable. Don't take any silly risks tonight.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 20): Invite some guests into your home tonight, and entertain them well. Don't do anything which could damage your reputation.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 to Feb. 19): This is a good day for communicating with others, whether for business or personal reasons. Tend to your financial situation.

PISCES (Feb. 20 to Mar. 20): Finances are vital to you right now, so find a way to increase your income and set up a better budget. Enjoy your good friends tonight.

The Daily Commuter Puzzle



ACROSS
1 Boyfriend
5 Vice
10 Hurry
14 Without stiffness
15 Bear
16 A Fitzgerald
17 Midwest resident
18 Overweight
19 Blue dye
20 Dishevel
22 Frank
24 Hurt
26 Cry of a dog
27 Abuse
31 Promise
35 Country program
36 Nimble
38 Waterless
39 Simian for short
41 Gesture of assent
42 Small antelope
43 Castle old style
44 Dormant
46 Army man
48 Asparagus
49 Maxine
50 Simplicity
51 Loch —
53 Entice
54 Laid in again
56 Servile
57 Follower
62 Field
63 Steam room
65 Domesticated
66 Noreg god
67 Pay for
68 meter
69 Seeds
70 Sulting
71 Bring up

DOWN
1 Tell all
2 Ireland
3 Oriental nurse
4 Optimistic
5 Attired
6 Researcher's base
7 US author
8 Very untidy
9 Maxine
10 Come into view again
11 Forearm bone
12 Slightly
13 Healthy
21 Remnant
23 Everyone
25 Morale
27 Urines
28 "I saw — a — asking"
29 Singer Frankie
30 Implements
32 Travel
33 Desires
34 Progress for publication
37 Perfect
40 Ramble
42 "Norma" o.g.
44 Helps
45 Try to equal
48 Radiation measure
50 Flower
52 Fixed gaze
54 Dem it
55 Reverberate
56 Lined up
57 Litigant
59 Leafy vegetable
60 Post Lazarus
61 12 months
64 Peater

Morocco trumpets for World Cup finals

CASABLANCA (R) — Morocco, aspiring to be the first African nation to host the World Cup finals, has been beating its own drum loudly this week before top international soccer officials.

At the opening of the Africa Nations Cup finals, the continent's most prestigious tournament, the message was paraded around the stadium and emblazoned on the scoreboards, "Morocco — candidate for the 1994 World Cup."

The organizers have been treating this event both as an audition before FIFA, the game's world governing body, and as a dress rehearsal. Favourable comments from players, coaches, or officials have received acres of space in the country's press.

FIFA president Joao Havelange, one of the guests of honour, was impressed by the development of the game in this North African country.

Before his departure Monday he did nothing to dampen World Cup fever in football-crazy North Africa where children seem to kick balls everywhere — street corners, dimly lit alleyways and on every small patch of sun-baked turf.

Brazil and the United States are also vying for the 1994 tournament but Havelange stressed that he was "a friend of Africa and Morocco."

He was received by King Hassan — a keen soccer fan himself — at his winter palace in Marrakesh.

Havelange told a news conference FIFA's executive committee would decide the venue July 4 based on objective criteria.

"FIFA is very moved to see how football has developed in this region. Many European teams are taking players from Africa and that is an illustration of how the game here was evolved."

FIFA secretary-general Joseph Blatter was also complimentary, saying Morocco had scored high marks for organisation in the Africa Nations Cup.

"Morocco's ability to organise this kind of event confirms the good impression myself and the FIFA technical mission already had," he was quoted as saying in the local daily Le Matin du Sahara.

Blatter said Casablanca's Mohammed V stadium was up to World Cup standards. The capital, Rabat, boasts another top-

class stadium but doubts have been expressed about facilities in other areas.

However, Morocco has promised to bring stadiums in Marrakesh and Agadir — tourist centres where there are hundreds of hotel beds — up to scratch.

'Do or die stage'

The Africa Nations Cup soccer tournament will strain some nerves and break some hearts when four of the best teams on the continent fight for semi-final places Saturday.

Fresh from Wednesday's exhilarating 1-0 victory over Algeria, Morocco will be pumping on all cylinders for their encounter with Ivory Coast.

Known as the "Lions of the Atlas," they will be out for another kill before 80,000 highly partisan supporters in the Mohammed V stadium in Casablanca.

The appetiser for the crowd will be Zaire versus Algeria, vying for a semi-final berth in the other game in Group A — the toughest section of the eight-team tournament.

The prize for the two survivors — a match-up against Nigeria, Cameroon, or Egypt next

Wednesday depending how a tight Group B finally ends up Sunday.

Cameroon look certain to qualify after they meet Kenya, the only team sacrificed so far. Nigeria need only a draw against defending champions Egypt who must win to go through.

Kenya's Harambee stars were eliminated Thursday after successive 3-0 defeats at the hands of Nigeria's Green Eagles and the Pharoahs of Egypt.

Ivory Coast, known as the Elephants, will not go down easily. They will be looking for revenge after a 2-1 defeat last November in the same stadium. That defeat, which denied them a ticket to the Olympic Games in Seoul this summer, still rankles.

With only two points from two games, another draw might not be enough to keep them alive. The same is true of the Leopards of Zaire.

Algeria, who have one point, must win to have a chance. Morocco, at the top of Group A with three points, need only a draw, but their performance against Algeria has raised the expectations of their fans.

The team's Brazilian coach Jose Mehdhi Faria, said he was very satisfied with his players in the Algerian game.

Real Madrid battles through to semifinals

MADRID (R) — Real Madrid, desperately seeking to end 22 years of frustration in the European Cup, made no pretence at elegance Wednesday as they forced their way into next month's semifinals with a narrow and ugly victory over Bayern Munich.

In a rugged second leg tie, marred by endless stoppages and seven cautions, Madrid triumphed 2-0 for a 4-3 aggregate triumph which sent their noisy fans hooting and shouting into a night of celebrations.

First half goals by Yugoslav midfielder Milan Jankovic and

Spanish international Michel secured the Spaniards' passage to the last four where they will be joined by two other former winners Benfica of Portugal and Steaua Bucharest and the runaway leaders of the Dutch First Division PSV Eindhoven.

The victory was Madrid's first over the team their Dutch coach Leo Beenhakker described as their "bete noir" in European competition, but was achieved, alas, with none of the style once synonymous with Champions Cup triumphs by Spain's most famous club.

Beenhakker admitted as much

when he said afterwards: "It was an important victory because we got through to the semifinals and finally overcame these opponents."

"In these games, it is logical that you don't get a good performance, an entertaining match... because what you are looking for are results and you earn these by playing practically."

"It wasn't the game of the season, but it was hot and strong."

Beenhakker might have said pragmatic instead of practical, such was the pre-meditated nature of much of the foul play on

view between the Spanish and West German champions.

Madrid, as they have proved frequently this season, are well capable of more refined and convincing performances and it is to be hoped they will produce them if they go on to gain that elusive seventh triumph in the premier tournament.

To many neutrals, a Madrid-Benfica final would be the most attractive as it would recreate an image of the great early years of the European Cup — Real dominated the tournament for its first five years and Benfica won it twice in 1961 and 1962.

Everton confident of stopping Liverpool

LONDON (R) — Everton, who stand between Liverpool and an outright record of 30 unbeaten First Division games since the start of the season, are convinced they will end their city rivals' run Sunday.

Everton are the only team to have beaten Liverpool in 37 games in all competitions since last August — they beat their city rivals in the League Cup — and their England right back Gary Stevens believes they can repeat that victory in English soccer's biggest fixture of the season.

"We've played them three times, beaten them once and had two results go against us which did not reflect how the games went," he said.

"We haven't taken any pleasure in seeing them go into the history books. I believe we are as good as Liverpool. The difference is that this year things ha-

ven't gone our way.

"They haven't been beaten in the League and everyone has seen them romping away with the title... our supporters can't go to work or the pub without being "slaughtered" by Liverpool fans.

"This match is our cup final, if you like. If we're going to finish second, we have to beat Liverpool. They have got everything to lose this time. Their strength is their defence and I think a single goal could settle it on Sunday."

Liverpool's 15 point lead at the top has effectively reduced the remainder of the championship into a battle for second place with the added attraction of a possible place in Europe next season if English clubs are readmitted.

Everton may feel they have a good chance of finishing runners-up, but they will face strong opposition from Manchester Un-

ited, currently second, who visit fourth-placed Nottingham Forest in Saturday's outstanding First Division match.

United captain Bryan Robson said: "It looks as if Liverpool have sewn up the League, but it is important for us to finish second in case it does provide a qualifying place for Europe."

The England captain is hoping Forest's success in reaching the Football Association (F.A.) Cup semifinals may have an adverse effect on their League form.

"Sometimes I think you are apt to relax in the league when you are getting near to a Wembley visit... I hope Forest do that," he said.

"Brian Clough has had a brilliant career with Forest and keeps on building good teams. He has a fine young side at the moment, but hopefully they'll get a little bit interested in the cup and slacken

off in the League games."

Manchester United hope to welcome back Irish international defender Paul McGrath who has been out with a knee injury since last October and recall Viv Anderson and Norman Whiteside after suspension.

Clough, who has warned his players he will drop them if they relax in the League, on Thursday signed Preston striker Nigel Jenson, 18, but he is unlikely to play against United.

Arsenal, along with Everton, the other main contenders for second place, meet Newcastle at Highbury and both teams have central defensive problems.

Arsenal's Irish international David O'Leary is struggling with an Achilles tendon injury and Newcastle have both Peter Jackson and Kevin Scott out with influenza.

Peanuts



Mutt'n' Jeff



Andy Capp



Over 3,000 U.S. troops to back Honduras

Honduran planes bomb Sandinista border camp

SAN ANDRES DE BOCAY, Nicaragua (AP) — Two unidentified jets from Honduras dropped bombs near a Sandinista military encampment along the Nicaragua-Honduras border as U.S. troops arrived in Honduras in a show of support against an alleged Nicaraguan incursion.

Two bombs fell in Nicaraguan territory and a third across the Coco River in Honduras. Nicaraguan officers said. There was no damage or injuries.

The raid Thursday came the day after Honduras accused Nicaragua of sending thousands of soldiers across the border in pursuit of U.S.-supported contra rebels.

The government Voice of Nicaragua radio also said Thursday that unidentified planes from Honduras buzzed Comito, Nicaragua's main port, and anti-aircraft batteries fired on them.

A Honduran armed forces spokesman in Tegucigalpa, the Honduran capital, said the bombs were aimed at Sandinista forces that crossed into the neighbouring country. He denied the planes entered Nicaraguan airspace.

More than 3,000 U.S. soldiers began arriving in Honduras Thursday in a show of support for Honduras.

'Combat and liquidate'

Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega declared his army ready to "combat and liquidate" the U.S. troops, and said his soldiers would not withdraw from the border region.

Nicaragua has committed an estimated 6,000 soldiers to an anti-rebel operation in an area running from the country's central region to the border. Most of the Sandinista troops are at the frontier.

About 25 reporters, most of them Americans, watched as the jets roared into Nicaragua at mid-

day Thursday. The journalists dived for cover but were not hurt as the bombs exploded as close as 70 metres away.

The Sandinista government flew the journalists earlier Thursday to the region for a briefing on its offensive against the U.S.-supported contra rebels.

The bombs missed five Soviet-made helicopters used in the area for movement of troops. In Washington, sources who spoke on condition of not being identified claimed one Soviet-made helicopter on the ground had been damaged. The Soviet Union supplies the Sandinistas with military hardware and training.

The Sandinistas opened fire at the planes with anti-aircraft guns but apparently did not hit either of them.

Some military officials in Nicaragua described the planes as French-made Mysteres, while others said they were U.S.-made F-5s. The Honduran air force has both.

A U.S. official in Washington said two U.S.-built F-5s and four Super-Mystere attack jets of the Honduran Air Force carried out the raid.

"This was totally a Honduran operation," the official said, speaking on condition of not being identified.

Honduras has one of Central America's smallest armies and relies on air superiority for defence. Honduras and Mexico are the only nations in the region with jet fighters.

Manuel Suarez, the Honduran

Armed Forces spokesman, said in a telephone interview that the air force dropped at least five bombs inside Honduras along the border region near Bocay. He said he had no further information.

'Escalation of the war'

Ortega called the dispatch of U.S. troops to Honduras "one more escalation of the war against Nicaragua" and demanded a meeting of the U.N. Security Council.

A council meeting Thursday about British military manoeuvres in the Falkland Islands became an impromptu debate of the U.S. action, with barbs exchanged by Nicaragua and Panama on one side and the United States on the other.

Herbert Okun, the deputy permanent U.S. representative, told the Security Council that U.S. troops were sent to Honduras because of the "Nicaraguan incursion into Honduras."

"This is designed to show our staunch support for the government of Honduras at a time when its territorial integrity is violated by the Nicaraguan army," Okun said.

Okun said the U.S. soldiers would not be deployed for combat.

Earlier, Nicaraguan and Panamanian envoys criticised the

United States.

"Nicaragua denounces once again this gunboat policy which reflects disdain for our dignity and rights and we must... oppose them with the force of right, law, justice and the decisive strength of international solidarity," said Nicaragua's acting ambassador, Julio Icaza Gallardo.

In Managua, Ortega said the Sandinistas had mounted an offensive to reclaim territory held by the contras.

"We logically are going to maintain our offensive," he said. "We are not going to withdraw our troops now that we have recovered our territory."

"We are ready to combat and liquidate the famous forces of the 82nd Airborne Division," he said, referring to some of the U.S. troops sent to the region.

U.S. demonstrations

Demonstrators toppled police barricades in San Francisco, burned a U.S. flag in Minneapolis and erected a mock "Central America War Memorial" in Philadelphia as thousands protested the movement of U.S. troops to Honduras.

About 25 people were arrested in San Francisco in one of several protests in California Thursday.

Defence chiefs end talks

BERNE, Switzerland (AP) — The U.S. and Soviet defence chiefs briefly debated the Nicaragua-Honduras dispute Thursday before concluding three days of military talks on an upbeat note, said U.S. Defence Secretary Frank C. Carlucci.

Carlucci said he protested Nicaragua's incursion into Honduras to Soviet Defence Minister Dmitri Yazov, who "made some attempt to defend the Sandinista action."

"I would not characterise it as a vigorous defence," Carlucci told a news conference before leaving Berne en route to Washington.

Carlucci said he consulted with the White House beforehand and endorsed the decision to send an emergency U.S. force to Honduras on exercises.

Yazov was to address a separate news conference later in the day.

Carlucci described the talks, which were closed to reporters, as "cordial and businesslike," and said that Yazov invited him to Moscow to continue their discussions at an unspecified later date.

"Of course, there were a number of areas of disagreement, and a number of areas of agreement," said Carlucci.

Belfast violence met with plastic bullets

BELFAST (AP) — Young Roman Catholics bent on revenge for the attack on an Irish Republican Army (IRA) funeral hijacked cars and threw gasoline bombs Friday as Belfast police used plastic bullets.

Tension remained high after Wednesday's attack by a Protestant gunman on the funeral of three IRA guerrillas which left

three dead and 68 injured.

Ignoring pleas for calm, mobs of young men set vehicle ablaze and threw gasoline bombs at security forces, who responded to the sporadic incidents with plastic bullets.

The violence died out before dawn Friday, leaving some Belfast roads blocked by burned-out vehicles.

Kim Dae-Jung resigns

SEOUL (AP) — Opposition leader Kim Dae-Jung stepped down Thursday in a last-ditch attempt to reunite South Korea's bitterly divided opposition parties before elections next month.

Kim resigned as leader of the Party for Peace and Democracy (PPD) and appealed to the rival Democratic Renovation Party (RDP) to agree to an immediate merger.

"I have made up my mind to resign in the belief that everything must be done to ensure we do not miss the last chance for the merger, which is our supreme task," the veteran leader said in a statement.

Party officials announced Kim's resignation at a news conference, and he was reported in seclusion. The PPD said Kim was not feeling well.

It was not clear whether Kim's resignation would clear the way for reunification. The rival RDP discussed the resignation at a meeting and announced plans for a second meeting Friday to consider merging with the PPD.

Colombia plane crash claims 137 lives

CUCUTA, Colombia (AP) — An Avianca jetliner smashed into a mountain minutes after takeoff, triggered a landslide and burst into flames, killing all 137 people aboard, officials and witnesses said.

Among the 131 passengers were a Roman Catholic auxiliary bishop and more than 30 soccer players, officials said.

The Boeing 727 clipped trees before hitting the snow-covered mountain 80 kilometres away near Zulia, witnesses said.

The craft took off in heavy fog Thursday afternoon from Cucuta, 400 kilometres northeast of Bogota, on a domestic flight to the Caribbean port of Barranquilla.

Rescue workers who reached the wreckage Thursday night said there were no survivors. Colonel Miguel Benedetti, civil defence director for the state of North Santander, said in an interview by radio-telephone from Zulia, about 80 kilometres north of Cucuta.

"The impact of the plane against the mountain was so violent that it caused a landslide which buried part of the aircraft," said Benedetti.

'Sharpeville Six' execution stayed

PRETORIA (R) — The Pretoria supreme court Thursday halted the execution of the so-called "Sharpeville Six," 13 hours before they were due to hang for complicity in the murder of a black official.

The judge, Justice J.W. Human, said there was evidence that a witness at the original trial of the six blacks — five men and a woman — had lied to the court.

"I am of the opinion that there is cause to grant a stay of execution for all the (six) applicants," he told a packed courtroom.

The announcement of the temporary reprieve from the gallows was greeted with tumultuous applause. Relatives and friends of the six hugged each other and some burst into tears.

The group's lawyers requested a four-week stay of execution in their application. The postponement is effective until April 18 in which time the defence will seek to reopen the trial.

Lawyers argued that a key witness who gave evidence at the trial implicating two of the six had since admitted he lied on police instructions.

The judge said if that had been known at the time "it might have had a significant effect."

President P.W. Botha has been under intense pressure to commute the sentences from foreign governments.

White liberal parliamentarian

Helen Suzman, who Thursday met Botha to plead for mercy, told Reuters the court decision was "a huge relief."

"At least we know tomorrow they are not going to hang. It means there is some leeway for a further decision," she said.

Bomb kills 3

Only hours before the court hearing began a huge car bomb killed three people and left a trail of carnage on the pavements of a Johannesburg suburb.

Twenty people, including a seven-month-old baby girl blown from her pram, were injured in the attack in the satellite town of Krugersdorp, local police chief Dolf Van Vuuren told reporters.

The bomb exploded at the height of the rush hour outside a magistrate's court, damaging buildings hundreds of metres away.

Prakesh Diar, the lawyer for the six, went straight from the courthouse to Pretoria Central Prison where they have been on death row since last year.

"I want to say thank you to Mr. Reagan and Mrs. Thatcher. They gave too, too much help," Jufie Mokoena, sister of one of the six, told Reuters.

The U.S. president and British prime minister were among numerous world leaders and human rights organisations who lobbied to stop the hangings.

Philippines: Muslim group's bid will fail

AMMAN (R) — The Philippines government is confident the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), due to meet here next week, will not accept a Muslim separatist group as a full member, its ambassador said Thursday.

The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), seeking regional autonomy in the southern Philippines, wants full membership of the 46-nation OIC, where it has had observer status since 1974.

MNLF spokesman said in Manila Monday they had a million signatures to back the drive for OIC membership, sparking fears of renewed war in Mindanao and other southern islands.

"We are confident that even if the MNLF should file a membership application, it will not prosper," the Philippines ambassador to Jordan, Juan Saez, told Reuters.

In Manila, the Philippines army said it would regard as an act of rebellion any MNLF declaration of a separate government in the southern Philippines, where troops were placed on alert.

Saez said President Corason Aquino's government had mounted a quiet diplomatic campaign to persuade OIC foreign

ministers to rebuff the MNLF at their conference opening Monday.

According to a draft agenda, the OIC is due to discuss "the question of the Muslims of the southern Philippines."

Several diplomats from Islamic nations said they doubted an MNLF application to join would come to a vote. "The OIC will deliberate on the question, but will not want to do anything that might damage the fabric of a state," one said.

The MNLF compares itself to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), the only OIC member which is not a state.

Saez said Philippines Foreign Secretary Raul Manglapus wrote to Jordanian Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri asking his help to ensure the OIC continued to regard the Muslim question as "a domestic affair of the Philippines."

Philippines diplomats in Amman and elsewhere have lobbied representatives of Islamic governments on the issue, he added.

Aquino is committed to allowing the country's five million Muslims limited self-government in the south, and has passed legislation in the past week setting up a regional consultative committee on the issue.

WORLD NEWS BRIEFS

Hun Sen 'ready to meet Sihanouk' again

BANGKOK (AP) — Hun Sen, premier of the pro-Vietnamese government in Kampuchea, has told resistance leader Prince Norodom Sihanouk he is ready for a third round of talks on ending the 9-year-old Kampuchean war. Hun Sen sent the message to Sihanouk last Friday, said a dispatch from the official Kampuchean news agency SPK. The report, dated Wednesday, was seen in Bangkok Thursday. In the message, quoted by the agency, Hun Sen said he was pleased that Sihanouk wished to resume the talks. Sihanouk previously had cancelled the third round, scheduled for April in North Korea. But Sihanouk hinted at a change of heart after recently reversing his decision to quit the presidency of a three-party guerrilla coalition fighting Hun Sen's government and Vietnamese troops supporting it.

Sumgait party chief sacked

MOSCOW (R) — The Communist Party chief of the Azerbaijani city of Sumgait, where Armenians were hunted and killed last month, has been sacked for "major shortcomings" in his work, information officials in the area said Thursday. The officials, contacted by telephone from Moscow, said the mayor of the city, a key industrial centre and the scene of the Soviet Union's worst known ethnic riots in decades, was also dismissed. The new Sumgait party leader, Salekh Gadzhiev, has since 1986 been prime minister in Nakhichevan, an Azerbaijani enclave inside Armenia on the Soviet border with Turkey and Iran.

90 killed in bus crash

NEW DELHI (AP) — At least 90 members of a Muslim wedding party died when their bus overturned and caught fire after the driver lost control while changing a cassette in the tape player, the United News of India said Thursday. Most of the victims in Wednesday night's crash in central India were women and children. The news agency said the bus was carrying about 105 people when the accident happened near Singa village in Madhya Pradesh state, 900 kilometres southeast of the Indian capital. About 15 people, including the driver and the bridegroom, escaped by breaking the windshield, UNI said.

Waldheim lauds Mother Teresa

VIENNA (R) — Austrian President Kurt Waldheim has praised Nobel Prize winner Mother Teresa's work for the poor in the slums of the Third World. At a ceremony in Vienna's United Nations Centre Wednesday evening, the former U.N. secretary-general said Mother Teresa should be an example for all humankind. "We take Mother Teresa's commitment as an example of somebody who does not ask questions, but acts wherever it is necessary," Waldheim said. At the ceremony marking International Peace Day, Mother Teresa called on industrialised nations to contribute more help to the Third World. "The least you can do for my brothers is help for me," she said.

Pope to visit southern Africa

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Pope John Paul II will visit southern Africa as a messenger of peace and brotherhood, a Vatican representative announced Thursday, detailing the pontiff's visit to five countries in September. The Pope will not visit South Africa, but will make brief stops in Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Mozambique from Sept. 10-19. Southern Africa is "an area of war, of violence and a place where, very often, the dignity of man and his rights are trod upon," said the announcement by the apostolic delegation in Pretoria.

15 Sinhalese villagers killed

COLOMBO (R) — Tamil separatist guerrillas stormed a Sinhalese village in eastern Sri Lanka and hacked to death 15 people, including two children and six women, military sources said Friday. They said 11 people were injured when about 60 Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam rebels in two groups attacked two Sinhalese settlements at Deegawapiya in Amparai district Thursday night. The Tigers used only knives, swords and machetes and not firearms to avoid alerting two army camps nearby, the sources said.

Through intensive prenatal and newborn care

Japan achieves world's lowest infant mortality rate

By Mari Taketa
The Associated Press

TOKYO — In less than a generation, Japan has slashed its infant mortality rate to the lowest in the world thanks to a formula of intensive prenatal care and government monitoring of newborns.

But Japan also has one of the world's highest abortion rates, and this reduces the number of high-risk pregnancies.

No other nation comes close to Japan's infant mortality rate of 4.9 per 1,000 births in 1987.

Finland and Sweden rank second behind Japan, with 6.0 deaths per 1,000 births, according to 1986 figures. The United States lags well behind with a rate of 10.6.

"Services have improved so much that this goes with it," Alan Fair, a pediatrician at the Tokyo Medical Clinic, said of Japan's impressive record. "It's just part of the overall care and better nutrition. And they have a remarkably good organisation where they get through to everybody."

Doctors get help from a literate society eager for medical advice, a system of universal health insurance and a tiny handbook which has been standard issue for every pregnant woman since World War II.

The Maternal and Child Health Handbook has 58 pages of health records and advice to carry the mother and child through the first six years of infancy and early childhood.

A typical mother-to-be is married, in her late 20s — the safest ages for childbearing — and pregnant with her first or second



In Japan, healthy babies make healthy children (File photo)

child. The handbook tells her what to eat, how much milk to drink and when to visit a doctor. By the time labour pains begin she will have undergone about a dozen prenatal checkups, two of them courtesy of the government.

"A Japanese mother is very interested in her own health and the child to be born," said Dr. Kazuaki Miyagishima of the Japanese Health Ministry's Maternal and Child Health Divi-

sion. "She follows intensive prenatal care."

Virtually all births occur in a delivery room. A hospital stay lasts a week, giving doctors time to test each newborn for any defects. Insurance pays most of the costs, which usually run about 200,000 yen (\$1,560).

Depending on need, the government will pay the rest — and throw in another 100,000 yen (\$780) by way of congratulations.

Babies get free checkups and public health nurses visit homes to provide advice. Legions of volunteers pay monthly house calls on rural newborns and report their progress to local officials.

The result: An infant mortality rate wrested from highs of more than 60 per 1,000 births just after World War II to the current record low.

"After the war much of Japan's land was destroyed — no food, no clothes, no houses. Many Japanese came back from China and other Asian countries. The population exploded and the nation was poor," said Dr. Eikichi Matsuyama, director of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Tokyo Kosei Nenkin Hospital.

"Then the medical system developed, science, the economy developed," he said.

However, there is another factor that officials do not mention, because no one knows the truth.

Japan's registered abortion rate of 17.1 per 1,000 women of childbearing age ranks near the top among industrialised nations. Doctors say the real figure could be two to four times higher, because not all abortions are reported to the government as required by law.

The fear among officials is that teenagers account for the suspected high number of hidden abortions. Only 5.4 per cent of registered abortions in 1986 involved teenagers, but that number has been rising along with teen pregnancies.

Babies born to teens and women over 35 are at highest risk for late fetal and early neonatal

deaths, and tend to weigh less at birth. Women over 35 are almost twice as likely to have infants with congenital defects.

In Japan, the two groups of high-risk mothers account for 42 per cent of registered abortions and only 8.8 per cent of live births.

The Eugenic Protection Law allows abortions even as late as the second trimester to "prevent the increase of inferior descendants and to protect the life of the mother."

In 1986, 254 abortions were carried out on women whose fetuses carried genetic diseases. More than 2,000 times as many were performed to protect maternal health, a category that includes financial inability to support a child.

"Abortion is quite a big programme in Japanese family planning," noted Haruo Konagai of the Japan Family Planning Association. "One-fourth of Japanese

'Oh boy'

WASHINGTON (AP) — In an off-the-cuff comment Wednesday that he immediately regretted, President Ronald Reagan said that he sometimes has not told Congress all that it wants to know. The incident occurred when reporters asked Reagan about his contention that he knew of no laws being broken in the Iran-contra affair. If that were so, he was asked, why did Robert McFarlane, his former national security adviser, plead guilty last week to four misdemeanor counts of withholding information from Congress? "He just pleaded guilty to not telling Congress everything it wanted to know. I've done that myself," Reagan said. When reporters pursued his comment, Reagan quickly said, "now don't distort that. No, I just mean... I just think Congress would like to be asking questions about almost anything, anytime." Trying to cut off the conversation, Reagan said, "This is in the courts. Let's wait and determine whether they say the law has been broken." As reporters were escorted from the room, Reagan turned to his guest, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, and said in a whisper: "Oh boy. Just for that careless remark... They'll go wild about Reagan wants to lie to Congress or something." The remark was picked up by a microphone.

Stuffed fish

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — Nearly a dozen people have been arrested for trying to smuggle 3 kilograms of heroin into the United States hidden inside 140 dead goldfish, federal agents said. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) said the heroin had been stuffed into condoms which then were inserted into the 15- to 23-centimetre fish. Acting on a tip from officials in China, the agents found the drug-filled dead fish among some 12,000 live ones waiting at San Francisco International Airport to be picked up by a local goldfish dealer.

Elizabeth honoured for AIDS fight

ATHENS (R) — Actress Elizabeth Taylor was awarded the 1988 Onassis prize "For Man and Society" Friday for her campaign against AIDS, the Onassis Foundation announced in Athens. She shares the award and \$100,000 prize with the French organisation AIDES "for their invaluable contribution to encouraging the awareness of society, governments and authorities of the tragic dimensions of this contemporary 'plague' which endangers mankind everywhere," the citation said. Taylor, who said she will come to Athens to receive the prize in May, sent a message to the foundation saying: "In accepting this award, I do so, not only for myself, but for all those who suffer from this devastating disease."



Physical check-ups for three-month-old babies at local health centre (File photo)